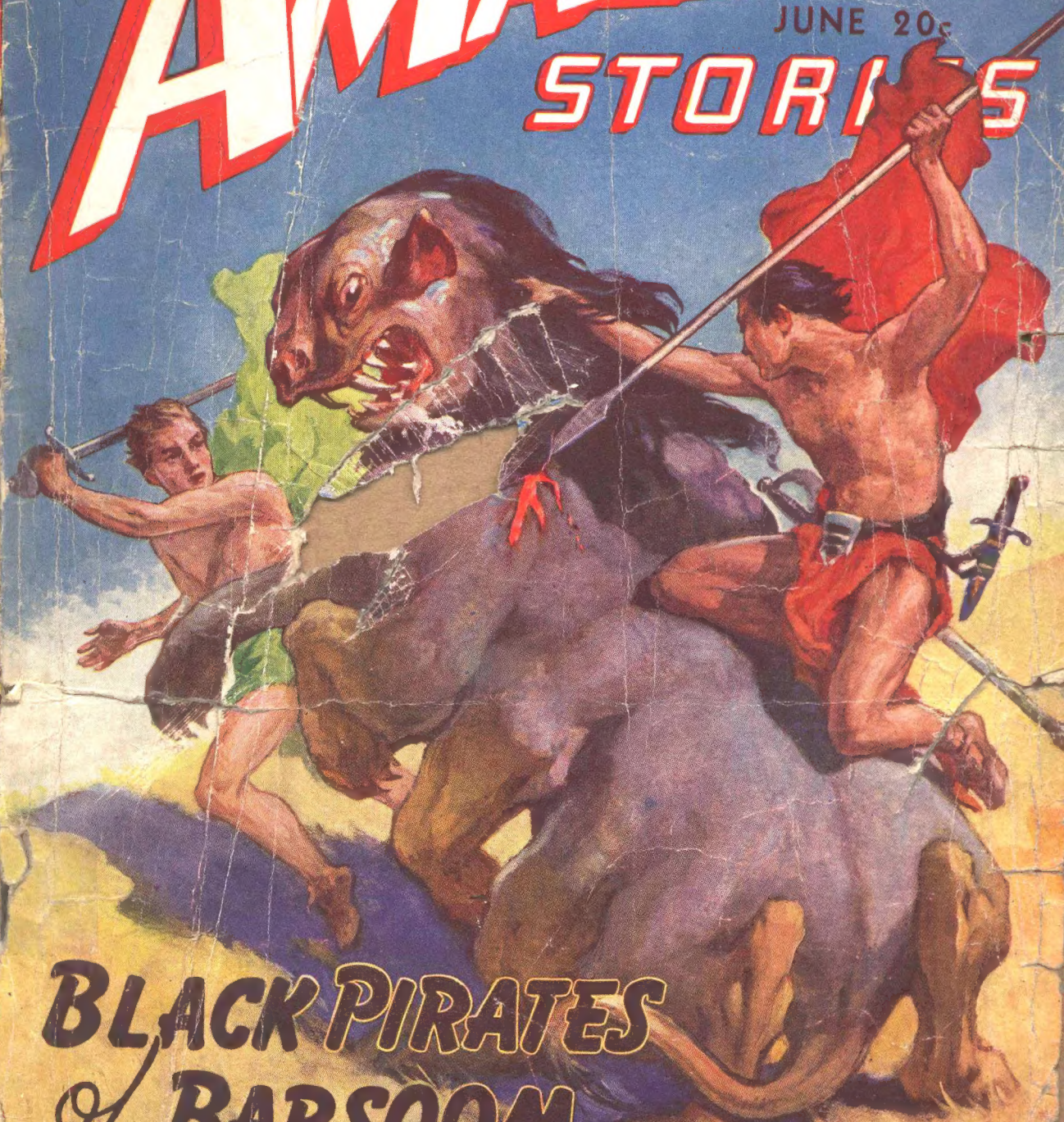
The GIRL FROM VENUS by David V. Reed

See BACK COVER

AMAZING STORIES

JUNE 20¢



BLACK PIRATES of BARSOOM

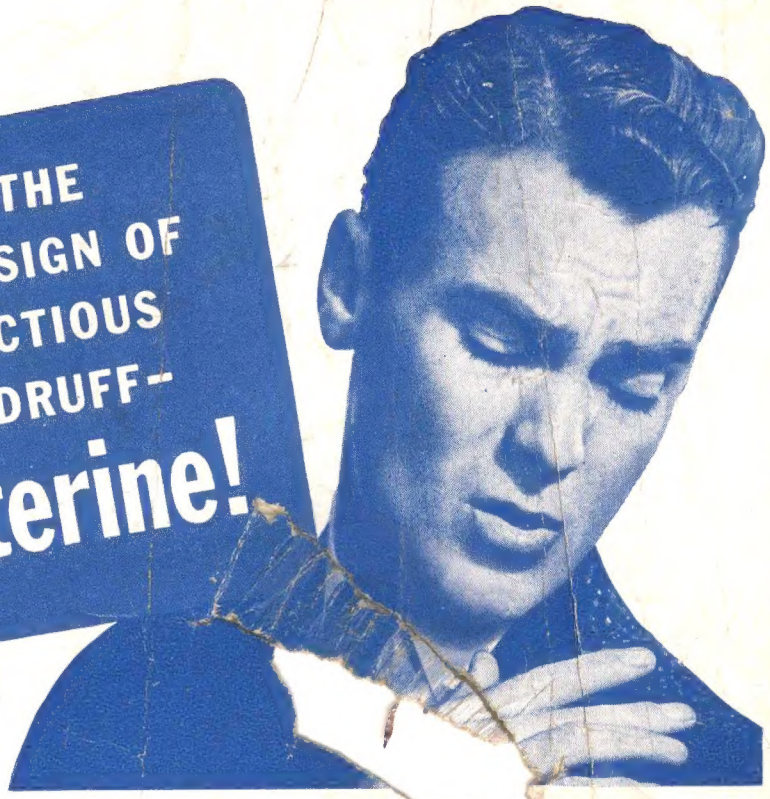
by EDGAR RICE BURROUGHS

VOLUME 15 NUMBER 6

AMAZING STORIES

JU 1941

AT THE FIRST SIGN OF INFECTIOUS DANDRUFF— Listerine!



WHEN ugly flakes and scales begin to speck your clothes, when your scalp begins to itch annoyingly, it's time to act—and act *fast!*

Nature may be warning you that infectious dandruff has set in . . . may be telling you to do something about it before it gets any worse.

Start now with Listerine Antiseptic. Just douse it on your scalp and hair morning and night and follow with vigorous and persistent massage.

This is the simple medical treatment which has shown such outstanding results in a substantial majority of clinical test cases . . . the easy method used by thousands in their own homes.

Listerine often brings quick improvement, because it gives both hair and scalp an antiseptic bath. The loosened dandruff scales begin to disappear. Your scalp feels healthier, more invigorated. And meanwhile, Listerine is killing millions of germs on scalp and hair, including the queer "bottle bacillus," recognized by outstanding authorities as a causative agent of the infectious type of dandruff.

Clinical results of this simple, pleasant treatment have been literally amazing. In one test, 76% of dandruff sufferers who used Listerine and massage twice a day, within a month showed complete disappearance of, or marked improvement in, the symptoms.

If you've got the slightest symptom of this trouble, don't waste any time. You may have a real infection, so begin today with Listerine Antiseptic and massage. To save yourself money, buy the large economy-size bottle.

LAMBERT PHARMACAL CO., *St. Louis, Mo.*

THE TREATMENT

that brought improvement to 76% of cases in a clinical test

MEN: Douse full strength Listerine on the scalp morning and night. **WOMEN:** Part hair at various places, and apply Listerine right along the part with a medicine dropper, to avoid wetting the hair excessively.

Always follow with vigorous and persistent massage with fingers or a good hair brush. Continue the treatment so long as dandruff is in evidence. And even though you're free from dandruff, enjoy a Listerine massage once a week to guard against infection. Listerine Antiseptic is the same antiseptic that has been famous for more than 50 years as a mouth wash and gargle.

Now! Bankers Life & Casualty Co.
Insures Your Entire Family
IN A SINGLE POLICY

New TRIPLE BENEFIT FAMILY GROUP POLICY WITH COPYRIGHTED "SAME DAY PAY" FEATURE!
YOURS For Only a Few Pennies a Day!

AS PLAINLY STATED IN THE POLICY
YOUR ENTIRE FAMILY IS INSURED UP TO:
$1,000.00 maximum for natural or ordinary accidental death
$2,000.00 maximum for auto accidental death...
$3,000.00 maximum for accidental death by travel
All for $1.00 Per Month
The policy is not cancelled by the death of insured members. The benefits are paid as long as premiums remain in force insuring the rest in the family group as premiums are divided equally between the number insured and benefits are according to the attained ages of members in...

INSURES MEN, WOMEN, CHILDREN—AGES 1-75 IN A SINGLE POLICY

At last! Bankers Life and Casualty Company now offers you SAFE, LIBERAL LEGAL RESERVE INSURANCE that protects your entire family—*at amazing LOW COST!* Imagine—only $1.00 per month pays for Father, Mother, Children, Grandparents and gives you Fast-paying Single, Double and TRIPLE BENEFIT protection against natural, ordinary accidental, auto or travel accidental death, on every member insured. And Cash benefits can be collected *on SAME DAY death occurs—through your own local home town bank! Think of it!*

$1.00 A MONTH PAYS FOR ALL

NO MEDICAL EXAMINATION

Men, Women, Children from ages 1 to 75 are included in the wonderful new improved low cost policy without medical examination. This splendid policy is now being hailed and proclaimed all over America—and everywhere grateful families are turning to this marvelous new policy for the immediate cash it brings them in their actual hour of need. Don't delay mailing FREE coupon—you may be sorry later.

One never knows. Recently a Florida man and his wife were both killed in a single accident. They sent for their Family Policy only a few days before. And Bankers paid DOUBLE benefits on BOTH deaths. If they had delayed even a few days, they would not have been covered.

HERE IS HOW YOU COLLECT AT YOUR LOCAL BANK!

COLLECT FULL BENEFITS AT YOUR LOCAL BANK—SAME DAY DEATH OCCURS

Bankers new copyrighted "Same Day Pay" Policy authorizes your local home town bank to pay claims *in full*, in strict accordance with the terms of the policy. Think what it will mean to you to have this great policy—at only a few cents a day!

ENTIRE POLICY PAYABLE AT SIGHT

The policy form is negotiable. You can use it like a post-dated check. Present it at *your own bank* immediately following death of a family member and the bank can make full payment. Think of the convenience of this amazing, quick-paying feature.

Here's Your Opportunity to Insure Your ENTIRE Family!

Double Benefit Paid Before 10-Day Inspection Period Expired!
B. F. G., Texas, says: "I want to thank your company for your fair and square dealing. I want to tell the world you pay off according to your agreement in the policy. I'll be glad to recommend you to anyone as honest and on the square."

SEND NO MONEY
MAIL COUPON FOR FREE OFFER

Remember! We don't ask you to risk a single penny—get this copyrighted "Same-Day-Pay" Policy on our 10-Day Free Inspection Offer. Only a limited number of these policies to be issued, so hurry. It is to your advantage to *Act At Once!*

NO AGENT WILL CALL

You can examine this superb policy AT OUR EXPENSE. Just fill in coupon now. No agent will call. No obligation. Send no money.

BANKERS LIFE AND CASUALTY COMPANY
Bankers Insurance Bldg., Jefferson Sts., Dept. 192
Chicago, Illinois

Send your Free 10-Day Trial Offer. I want complete information; all the facts with proof—letters from beneficiaries. Please send at once, absolutely *free* and postage paid.

Name.....

Address or R.F.D.....

City or Town ..... State.....

Send No Money—Rush coupon today—No Agent will call!

JUNE
1941

AMAZING STORIES

TRADE MARK REGISTERED

VOLUME 15
NUMBER 6

Contents

STORIES

BLACK PIRATES OF BARSOOM (Novel).....by Edgar Rice Burroughs.. 8
John Carter had to hide the magic in his sword arm, and yet he had to fight Barsoom's best blades—

LOST TREASURE OF ANGKOR (Novelet).....by [illegible]es Norman..... 44
Back into time they hurled—straight into the catastrophe that blotted [illegible]ymers out of history!

THE GIRL FROM VENUS (Novelet).....by D[illegible]d V. Reed..... 72
Merrill was a romancing patrolman on penalty duty; just the wrong man to m[illegible] a princess in distress.

THE QUANDARY OF QUINTUS QUAGGLE (Short) by William P. McGivern.. 88
A heck of a time to turn to stone—just when your job, your future, and [illegible] depend on action!

PEPPER POT PLANET (Short).....by Duncan Farnsworth....102
There was something funny about this revolution, but Tonya believed in it, and Tonya was beautiful . . .

HOMER HIGGINBOTTOM, RAIN MAKER (Short)...by Milton Kaletsky.....114
They laughed at Homer and tossed him out on his ear; but they stopped laughing when it began to rain

FEATURES

The Observatory.....6
Ersatz.....86
Cagliostro.....87
Odd Science Facts.....101
Forecast.....131
Scientific Mysteries.....132
Strange, But True.....135
Science Quiz.....137
Meet The Authors.....138
Discussions.....140
Correspondence Corner.....145
A City on Pluto.....146

Front cover painting by J. Allen St. John, illustrating a scene from "Black Pirates Of Barsoom"
Back cover painting by Frank R. Paul, depicting "A City On Pluto"
Illustrations by J. Allen St. John, Julian S. Krupa, Robert Fuqua, Jay Jackson, Magarian, Joe Sewell.
Cartoons by Dick Shaw, Guy Gifford.

Copyright, 1941, ZIFF-DAVIS PUBLISHING COMPANY
Member of the Audit Bureau of Circulations
William B. Ziff, Publisher; B. G. Davis, Editor; J. Fred Henry, Business Manager;
Raymond A. Palmer, Managing Editor; Herman R. Bollin, Art Director

We do not accept responsibility for the return of unsolicited manuscripts or artwork. To facilitate handling, the author should inclose a self-addressed envelope with the requisite postage attached, and artists should enclose or forward return postage. Accepted material is subject to whatever revision is necessary to meet requirements. Payments for manuscripts and illustrations will be made at our current rates.

The names of all characters that are used in short stories, serials and semi-fiction articles that deal with types are fictitious. Use of a name which is the same as that of any living person is coincidental

AMAZING STORIES JUNE 1941

Published monthly by ZIFF-DAVIS PUBLISHING COMPANY at 608 South Dearborn Street, Chicago, Ill. New York Office, 381 Fourth Avenue, New York City. Entered as second class matter October 6, 1938, at the Post Office, Chicago, Illinois under the act of March 3rd, 1879. Subscription $2.40 a year (12 issues); Canada $2.90; Foreign $3.40. Subscribers should allow at least two weeks for change of address. All communications about subscriptions should be addressed to the Director of Circulation. 608 South Dearborn St., Chicago, Ill.

Volume XV
Number 6

DO THE DEAD RETURN?

A strange man in Los Angeles, known as "The Voice of Two Worlds," tells of astonishing experiences in far-off and mysterious Tibet, often called the land of miracles by the few travelers permitted to visit it. Here he lived among the lamas, mystic priests of the temple. "In your previous lifetime," a very old lama told him, "you lived here, a lama in this temple. You and I were boys together. I lived on, but you died in youth, and were reborn in England. I have been expecting your return."

The young Englishman was amazed as he looked around the temple where he was believed to have lived and died. It seemed uncannily familiar, he appeared to know every nook and corner of it, yet—at least in this lifetime—he had never been there before. And mysterious was the set of circumstances that had brought him. Could it be a case of reincarnation, that strange belief of the East that souls return to earth again and again, living many lifetimes?

Because of their belief that he had formerly been a lama in the temple, the lamas welcomed the young man with open arms and taught him rare mysteries and long-hidden practices, closely guarded for three thousand years by the sages, which have enabled many to perform amazing feats. He says that the system often leads to almost unbelievable improvement in power of mind, can be used to achieve brilliant business and professional success as well as great happiness. The young man himself later became a noted explorer and geographer, a successful publisher of maps and atlases of the Far East, used throughout the world.

"There is in all men a sleeping giant of mindpower," he says. "When awakened, it can make man capable of surprising feats, from the prolonging of youth to success in many other worthy endeavors." The system is said by many to promote improvement in health; others tell of increased bodily strength, courage and poise.

"The time has come for this long-hidden system to be disclosed to the Western world," declares the author, and offers to send his amazing 9000 word treatise—which reveals many startling results—to sincere readers of this publication, free of cost or obligation. For your free copy, address the Institute of Mentalphysics, 213 South Hobart Blvd., Dept. 201N, Los Angeles, Calif. Readers are urged to write promptly, as only a limited number of the free treatises have been printed.

The OBSERVATORY by THE Editor

OFFHAND, we'd say you liked our big 15th Anniversary issue! We want to thank all our friends for their comments, and for the praise they gave to the work of the authors included in the issue. The general concensus of opinion was that never before had such a pleasant surprise been handed out, even in spite of the fact that we had widely heralded the nature of it.

"Do it again!" was the most oft-repeated phrase. Well, fifteen years is a long time to wait, but if you insist . . . ! But maybe we won't wait that long. It wouldn't be too hard to figure out some other excuse to "do it again," or do we need an excuse?

ACCORDING to Don Wilcox, we have a little "unveiling" of secrets to do. He asks us to tell you that this office added a few minor touches to his fine story, "The Lost Race Comes Back." His request, says he, is to give credit where credit is due. But here's the real dope, readers. Don's a swell writer, and any editor can stick in a few words here and there without hurting it!

All of which we intend to prove with a story that's coming up soon that'll knock your ears off! Man, what a yarn it is! The best novel since Taine's "White Lily," ten years ago, in AMAZING STORIES Quarterly! It's called "Disciples of Destiny." Keep your eye peeled for further announcement. Huh? Of course, it's by Wilcox. Who'd you think we meant?

AND now that the anniversary is out of the way, here's John Carter, back again with his further adventures with Pan Dan Chee and his lovely granddaughter, Llana of Gathol. Remember the Black Pirates beneath the Valley Dor, and the Sea of Doxus. Sure! Well, this yarn takes you back there, and how!

FOR three months now we've been scheduling a story by Henry Gade called "The Magnetic Man" and each time it's been crowded out for some reason or other. Now, we're scheduling it again, for the July issue. *Maybe* it'll be there, and we hope it is, because it's quite a different little yarn. About a superman who . . . whoa, don't go off half cocked . . . who isn't so super as he thinks. We'll let you judge for yourself when you read it. It's late, but good, we think, in spite of being a superman story, because there's an odd little bit of situation that we've never seen before.

"Must be the cold wave the weather man predicted!"

IN this issue you'll find a yarn called "The Quandary of Quintus Quaggle." There's an interesting story behind the writing of this one.

Some time ago, authors William P. McGivern, David Wright O'Brien, and your editor, were invited to speak before the Chicago Fiction Guild. Well, speeches aren't much in an author's (or an editor's) line, so a rather unusual thing was done. The three of us sat down before that group of writers and worked out a plot as per the specifications laid down by the audience. Their requirements were simply that it be for AMAZING STORIES, be humorous, be laid in San Francisco, and be short.

In something like forty-five minutes a complete plot had been worked out, just as though the authors had called on the editor with an idea to discuss over a cup of coffee. That plot is realized in this issue. McGivern wrote the story, and we think he followed through excellently!

SOMETIMES an editor is surprised by the reception a story gets. He never knows exactly how any story will rate, although he can tell to a fair degree of accuracy which story in any particular issue will be most liked. The only time he is stumped is when he puts something into the book that is definitely off-trail. He probably put it there because he sorta liked it himself. And he hopes maybe the appeal it had to him would still be there when the readers read it. So, having gone off the deep end of what might be termed "editorial solidity," he waits with slowly graying hair for the readers to slam him back on his fading reputation, or cheer him for being a "courageous" editor. Don Wilcox's "Voyage That Lasted 600 Years" was such a story.

Coming soon is another such story, this one by David V. Reed. It's titled "Kid Poison." Our "courage" here is tested by the fact that the yarn is just what its title implies, a "kid" yarn. But your editor thinks that if you don't like it, you just aren't as juvenile as he thought you were — in fact, he'll think you're just an old fossil! All of which means we liked the story and we hope you do, because we need another editorial "boost" for our ego!

WE are going to throw our desk ruler away. Why? Well, it isn't accurate! They've discovered a better way to measure things. Who? Oh, the scientists — you know them, always puttering around with little things like that . . .

Well, anyway, some of the boys down at the University of California have invented a new yardstick as a standard for measurement of length. It's a ray with atoms of equal weight, emanating from mercury made from gold (yeah, that's what they said!). Its wavelength doesn't vary more than one fifty-billionth of an inch. Which is a far more accurate standard than the customary cadmium wavelength.

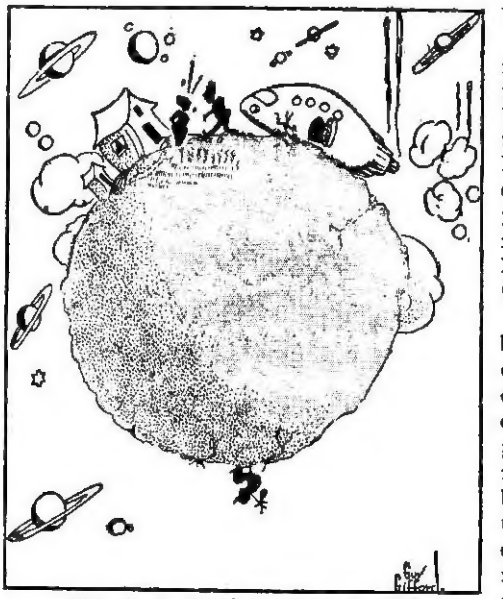
Gee! We never heard of *that* wavelength either! Well, let's skip it; it's outmoded anyhow.

EVER hear of the Khymers? No? Where in heck have you been? They are the most mysterious race in history. Lived in big cities in the Cambodian jungles, a couple million of 'em, and one night they packed up and left.

Sure. Vanished without a trace. Just like that. And never came back. Where'd they go? Well, your guess is as good as ours. But maybe not as good as James Norman's.

Y'see, in this issue James has presented us with a story about these Khymers, and it's a gol-danged good yarn, full of everything that makes you glad you stayed home in the easy chair instead of freezing to death at the hockey game. It's "Lost Treasure of Angkor." We advise you to read it now!

BY the way, it's illustrated by our new artist, Magarian. We'd like to have your opinion of this artist's work, since it is just a bit different than the sort of thing Krupa, Fuqua, McCauley, etc., turn out. You'll be seeing more of this new artist. Let's have your comments, please. Incidentally, the type of illustrating done here is rather tedious, and the artist deserves a hand for hard work. If you don't believe it, count the dots!



"Oh dear! I've been simply frantic! Junior's run away from home again!"

YOU think some of the gadgets Krupa imagines in his illustrations are complicated? Well, here's a real gadget that'll make you whistle. It's an ordinary (whoops, did we say ordinary?) pocket watch. A rather famous jeweler built it. It had a double face and 975 working parts.

It not only told time, but it registered the day of the week, a perpetual calendar of months and dates for a century ahead, phases of the moon, the four seasons, and actually boasted a compass and thermometer, a hygrometer and barometer—and most fascinating of all, automatically struck hours and quarters!

ALONG time ago we had a story in AMAZING STORIES in which a plane went so fast it began to catch up with the sound of its own propeller. Which isn't so amazing today, if the truth be known.

According to aviation experts, the United States now has several brand-new fighting planes that are so fast it's actually dangerous for a pilot to "shoot the works." The terminal velocity—maximum speed—of some of these ships is around 700 m.p.h. From a height of 30,000 feet, these lightning bolts would hurtle down to sea level in twenty to thirty seconds, if dived all-out. The pilot wouldn't have time to pull the ship level after attaining 700 m.p.h.; he'd be in the drink by then!

Which, to us, seems the least of the danger! What about a man's rather fragile insides?

(Concluded on page 43)

I rose stealthily from my couch

BLACK PIRATES OF BARSOOM

by EDGAR RICE BURROUGHS

The Black Pirates hailed the prowess of their slave swordsman, but had they known he was John Carter, he would have died on the spot!

LOOK! John Carter . . . there ahead of us!"

It was Llana of Gathol who spoke, and I was startled by the extreme note of concern in her lovely voice. I stopped suddenly, and Pan Dan Chee, following in my footsteps, bumped into me.

"What is it?" he asked.

I pointed ahead grimly.

"More than enough," I said, "if they see us!"

In the distance, and to our left was a caravan of green Martians. They had not seen us, and they were so far away that, for the moment, we were safe. But I saw that we would have to find shelter, or they would see us.

"Come," I said. "We've got to find a place to hide. When the mists lift, they will see us in this flat area."

We had already covered some two thousand five hundred haads of the four thousand we had to travel to reach Gathol, or at least as nearly as I could compute it, with a minimum of untoward incidents.

On two occasions we had been attacked by banths but had managed to kill them before they could harm us; and we had been attacked by a band of wild calots, but fortunately till now we had met no human beings—of all the creatures of Barsoom the most dangerous. For here, outside of your own country or the countries of your allies, every man is your enemy and bent upon destroying you; nor is it strange upon a dying world the natural resources of which have dwindled almost to the vanishing point and even air and water are only barely sufficient to meet the requirements of the present population.

The vast stretches of dead sea bottom, covered with its ocher vegetation, which we traversed was broken only occasionally by low hills. Here in shaded ravines we sometimes found edible roots and tubers. But for the most part we subsisted upon the milk-like sap of the mantalia bush, which grows on the dead sea bottom, though in no great profusion.

We had tried to keep track of the days since our departure from Horz, and it was on the thirty-seventh day during the fourth zode, which is roughly about one P.M. earth time, that we saw the caravan of green Martians.

As no fate can be worse than falling

into the hands of these cruel monsters, we now hurried on in the hope of crossing their path before we were discovered. We took advantage of what cover the sea bottom afforded us, which was very little; oftentimes compelling us to worm our way along on our bellies, an art which I had learned from the Apaches of Arizona.

I was in the lead, when I came upon a human skeleton. It was crumbling to dust, an indication that it must have lain there for many years, for so low is the humidity on Mars that disintegration of bony structures is extremely slow.

Within fifty yards I came upon another skeleton and after that we saw many of them. It was a gruesome sight, and what it portended I could not guess. At first I thought that perhaps a battle had once been fought here, but when I saw that some of these skeletons were fresh and well preserved and that others had already started to disintegrate I realized that these men had died many years apart.

At last I felt that we had crossed the line of march of the caravan and that as soon as we had found a hiding place we would be comparatively safe, and just then I came to the edge of a yawning chasm.

EXCEPT for the Grand Canyon of the Colorado, I had never seen anything like it. It was a great rift valley that appeared to be about ten miles wide and perhaps two miles deep, extending for miles in either direction.

There were outcroppings of rock at the rim of the rift, and behind these we hid. Scattered about us were more human skeletons than we had seen before. Perhaps they were a warning; but at least they could not harm us, and so we turned our attention to the approaching caravan, which had now changed its direction a little and was coming straight toward us. Hoping against hope that they would again change their direction and pass us, we lay there watching them.

When I had been first miraculously transported to Mars I had been captured by a horde of green men, and I had lived with them for a long time; so that I learned to know their customs well. Therefore, I was quite positive that this caravan was making the quinquennial pilgrimage of the horde to its hidden incubator.

Each adult Martian female brings forth about thirteen eggs each year; and those which reach the correct size, weight and specific gravity are hidden in the recesses of some subterranean

*If you will open your star atlas and turn to the map of the Western Hemisphere of Mars, you will be able to place the city of Horz on the principal meridian about 47° North Latitude. Horz is an ancient, supposedly uninhabited city deserted ages ago when the great ocean upon which it stood receded and eventually dried up. However, a tiny remnant of the descendants of the ancient inhabitants of the city still survived and lived there in an impregnable citadel in the center of Horz. These people, the Orovars, are white; and were, perhaps a million years ago, the dominant race of the Red Planet.

It was John Carter's ill fortune to be captured by them; but he eventually escaped with Llana of Gathol and Pan Dan Chee, an Orovar. (See "The City of Mummies", March '41 Amazing Stories.)

Carter had left his flier in a courtyard of the city when he landed there and fully expected to find it when he escaped, thus making it easy for the three fugitives to reach Gathol. But when he reached the spot where he had left his flier, he found that it was gone and there was indisputable evidence that it had been taken by Hin Abtol, self-styled Jeddak of Jeddaks of the North.

Hin Abtol, the rejected suitor of Llana of Gathol, had abducted her; and it was in escaping from him that she had found her way to Horz and a fortunate meeting with John Carter, whose daughter, Tara of Helium, is her mother, and with Pan Dan Chee who had immediately fallen in love with her.

It is four thousand haads from Horz to Gathol, a matter of some fifteen hundred earth miles, which is a long walk on anybody's planet; but there was no alternative for the three but to undertake it.

The adventures that befell them on that long hike, John Carter here tells you in his own words.—Ed.

vault where the temperature is too low for incubation.

Every year these eggs are carefully examined by a counsel of twenty chieftains, and all but about one hundred of the most perfect are destroyed out of each yearly supply.

At the end of five years about five hundred almost perfect eggs have been chosen from the thousand brought forth. These are then placed in the almost airtight incubators to be hatched by the sun's rays after a period of another five years.

All but about one per cent of the eggs hatch, and these are left behind when the horde departs from the incubator. If these eggs hatch, the fate of those abandoned little Martians is unknown. They are not wanted, as their off-spring might inherit and transmit the tendency to prolonged incubation and thus upset the system which has been maintained for ages and which permits the adult Martians to figure the proper time for return to the incubator almost to an hour.

The incubators are built in remote fastnesses where there is little or no likelihood of their being discovered by other tribes. The result of such a catastrophe would mean no children in the community for another five years.

The green Martians' caravan is a gorgeous and barbaric thing to see. In this one were some two hundred and fifty enormous three-wheeled chariots drawn by huge mastodonian animals known as zitidars, any one of which from their appearance might easily have drawn the entire train when fully loaded.

The chariots themselves were large, commodious and gorgeously decorated. In each was seated a female Martian loaded with ornaments of metal, with jewels and silks and furs; and upon the back of each of the zitidars a young Martian driver was perched on top of gorgeous trappings.

At the head of the caravan rode some two hundred warriors, five abreast; and a like number brought up the rear. About twenty-five or thirty out-riders flanked the chariots on either side.

The mounts of the warriors defy description in earthly words. They towered ten feet at the shoulder, had four legs on either side, a broad flat tail, larger at the tip than at the root, which they held straight out behind while running; a gaping mouth which splits the head from the snout to the long, massive neck.

Like their huge masters, they are entirely devoid of hair, but are a dark slate color and are exceedingly smooth and glossy. Their bellies are white and their legs shaded from the slate of the shoulders and hips to a vivid yellow at the feet. The feet themselves are heavily padded and nailless. Like the zitidars they wear neither bit nor bridle, but are guided entirely by telepathic means.

As we watched this truly magnificent and impressive cortege, it changed direction again; and I breathed a sigh of relief as I saw that they were going to pass us. Evidently, from the backs of their lofty mounts, they had seen the rift and were now moving parallel with it.

My relief was to be short-lived, for as the rear of the caravan was about to pass us one of the flankers spied us.

CHAPTER II

Flight Into the Valley

INSTANTLY the fellow wheeled his thoat and, shouting to his companions, came galloping toward us. We sprang to our feet with drawn swords, expecting to die; but ready to sell our lives dearly.

A moment after we had gained our feet, Llana exclaimed, "Look! Here is a trail down into the valley."

I looked around. Sure enough, now that we were standing erect, I could see the head of a narrow, precipitous trail leading down over the edge of the cliff. If we could but reach it, we would be safe, for the great thoats and zitidars of the green men could not possibly negotiate it. It was very possible that the green men were not even aware of the presence of the rift before they had come suddenly upon it, and this is entirely possible; because they build their incubators in uninhabited and unexplored wildernesses sometimes as much as a thousand miles from their own stamping grounds.

As the three of us, Llana, Pan Dan Chee, and I, ran for the trail, I glanced over my shoulder and saw that the leading warrior was almost on top of us and that we could not all reach the trail. So I called to Pan Dan Chee to hurry down it with Llana. They both stopped and turned toward me.

"It is a command," I told them. Reluctantly they turned and continued on toward the end of the trail, while I wheeled and faced the warrior.

He had stopped his thoat and dismounted, evidently intent upon capturing me rather than killing me; but I had no mind to be captured for torture and eventual death. It was far better to die now.

He drew his long-sword as he came toward me and I did likewise. Had there not been six of his fellows galloping up on their huge thoats I should not have worried greatly, for with a sword I am a match for any green Martian that was ever hatched. Even their great size gives them no advantage. Perhaps it handicaps them, for their movements are slow and ponderous by comparison with my earthly agility; and though they are twice my size, I am fully as strong as they. The muscles of earthly man have not contended with the force of gravity since the dawn of humanity for nothing. It has developed muscles; because every move we make is contested by gravity.

My antagonist was so terribly cocksure of himself, when facing such a seemingly puny creature as I, that he left himself wide open as he charged down upon me like a wild bull.

I SAW by the way he held his sword that he intended to strike me on the head with the flat of it, rendering me unconscious, so that he could more easily capture me; but when the sword fell I was not there; I had stepped to the right out of his way, and simultaneously I thrust for his heart. I would have punctured it, too, had not one of his four arms happened to swing against the point of my blade before it reached his body. As it was, I gave him a severe wound; and, roaring with rage, he turned and came at me again.

This time he was more careful; but it made no difference; he was doomed, for he was testing his skill against the best swordsman of two worlds.

The other six warriors were almost upon me now. This was no time for the sport of fencing. I feinted once, and ran him through the heart. Then, seeing that Llana was safe, I turned and ran along the edge of the rift; and the six green warriors did just what I had expected them to do. They had probably detached themselves from the rear guard for the sport of catching a red man for torture or for their savage games.

Bunched close together they came after me, the nailless, padded feet of their ponderous mounts making no sound upon the ocher, moss-like vegetation of the dead sea bottom. Their

spears couched, they came for me, each trying to make the kill or the capture. I felt much as a fox must feel at a fox hunt.

Suddenly I stopped, turned, and ran toward them. They must have thought that I had gone mad with fear, for they certainly couldn't have known what I had in mind and that I had run from them merely to lure them away from the head of the trail leading down into the valley. They were almost upon me when I leaped high into the air and completely over them. My great strength and agility and the lesser gravity of Mars had once again come to my aid in an emergency.

When I alighted, I dashed for the head of the trail. And when the warriors could stop their mounts they turned and raced after me, but they were too late. I can out-run any thoat that was ever foaled. The only trouble with me is that I am too proud to run; but, like the fellow that was too proud to fight, I sometimes have to, as in this case where the safety of others was at stake.

I reached the head of the trail in plenty of time and hurried down after Llana and Pan Dan Chee, whom I found waiting for me when I caught up with them.

AS we descended, I looked up and saw the green warriors at the edge of the rift looking at us; and, guessing what would happen, I dragged Llana into the shelter of an over-hanging ledge. Pan Dan Chee followed just as radium bullets commenced to explode close to us.

The rifles with which the green men of Mars are armed are of a white metal, stocked with wood; a very light and intensely hard growth much prized on Mars and entirely unknown to us denizens of Earth. The metal of the barrel is an alloy composed principally of aluminum and steel, which they have learned to temper to a hardness far exceeding that of the steel with which we are familiar. The weight of these rifles is comparatively little; and with the small caliber, explosive radium projectiles which they use and the great length of the barrel, they are deadly in the extreme and at ranges which would be unthinkable on Earth.

The projectiles which they use explode when they strike an object, for they have an opaque outer coating which is broken by the impact, exposing a glass cylinder, almost solid, in the forward end of which is a minute particle of radium powder.*

The moment the sunlight, even though diffused, strikes this powder it explodes with a violence which nothing can withstand. In night battles one notices the absence of these explosions, while the following morning will be filled at sunrise with the sharp detonations of exploding missiles fired the preceding night. As a rule, however, non-exploding projectiles are used after dark.

I felt it safer to remain where we were rather than to expose ourselves by attempting to descend, as I doubted very much if the huge green warriors would follow us down that steep declivity on foot, for the trail was too narrow for their great bodies and they hate going anywhere on foot.

After a few minutes I investigated and found that they apparently had departed. Then we started on down into the valley, not wishing to risk another encounter with that great horde of cruel

*John Carter has used the word radium in describing this powder because in the light of recent discoveries on earth he believes it to be a mixture of which radium is the base. In Captain Carter's manuscript it is mentioned always by the name used in the written language of Helium and is spelled in hieroglyphics which it would be difficult and useless to reproduce.—Ed.

and ruthless creatures.

CHAPTER III

The Hidden City

THE trail was steep and oftentimes dangerous for it zigzagged down the face of an almost perpendicular cliff. Occasionally on a ledge we would have to step over the skeleton of a man, and we passed three newly dead bodies in various stages of decomposition.

"What do you make of these skeletons and bodies?" asked Pan Dan Chee.

"I am puzzled," I replied; "there must be a great many more who died on the trail than those whose remains we have seen here. You will note that these all lie on ledges where the bodies could have lodged when they fell. Many more must have pitched to the foot of the cliff."

"But how do you suppose they met their death?" asked Llana.

"There might have been an epidemic of disease in the valley," suggested Pan Dan Chee, "and these poor devils died while trying to escape."

"I am sure I haven't the slightest idea of what the explanation can be," I replied. "You see the remains of harness on most of them, but no weapons. I am inclined to think that Pan Dan Chee is right in assuming that they were trying to escape, but whether from an epidemic of sickness or something else we may never know."

From our dizzy footing on that precarious trail we had an excellent view of the valley below. It was level and well watered and the monotony of the scarlet grass which grows on Mars where there is water, was broken by forests, the whole making an amazing sight for one familiar with this dying planet.

There are crops and trees and other vegetation along the canals; there are lawns and gardens in the cities where irrigation is available; but never have I seen a sight like this except in the Valley Dor at the South Pole, where lies the Lost Sea of Korus. For here there was not only a vast expanse of fertile valley but there were rivers and at least one lake which I could see in the distance; and then Llana called our attention to a city, gleaming white, with lofty towers.

"What a beautiful city," she said. "I wonder what sort of people live there?"

"Probably somebody who would love nothing better than to slit our throats," I said.

"We Orovars are not like that," said Pan Dan Chee, "we hate to kill people. Why do all the other races on Mars hate each other so?"

"I don't think that it is hate that makes them want to kill each other," I said. "It is that it has become a custom. Since the drying up of the seas ages ago, survival has become more and more difficult; and in all those ages they have become so accustomed to battling for existence that now it has become second nature to kill all aliens."

"I'd still like to see the inside of that city," said Llana of Gathol.

"Your curiosity will probably never be satisfied," I said.

WE stood for some time on a ledge looking down upon that beautiful valley, probably one of the most beautiful sights on all of Mars. We saw several herds of the small thoats used by the red Martians as riding animals and for food. There is a little difference in the saddle and butchering species, but at this distance we could not tell which these were. We saw game animals down there, too, and we who had been so long without good meat were tempted.

"Let's go down," said Llana; "we haven't seen any human beings and we don't need to go near the city; it is a long way off. I should like so much to see the beauties of that valley closer."

"And I would like to get some good red meat," I said.

"And I, too," said Pan Dan Chee.

"My better judgment tells me it would be a foolish thing to do," I said, "but if I had followed my better judgment always, my life would have been a very dull one."

"Anyway," said Llana, "we don't know that it is any more dangerous down on the floor of the valley than it was up on the edge of the rim. We certainly barely missed a lot of trouble up there, and it may still be hanging around."

I didn't think so; although I have known green Martians to hunt a couple of red men for days at a time. Anyway, the outcome of our discussion was that we continued on down to the floor of the valley.

Around the foot of the cliff, where the trail ended, there was a jumble of human bones and a couple of badly mangled bodies—poor devils who had either died on the trail above or fallen to their death here at the bottom. I wondered how and why.

Fortunately for us, the city was at such a distance that I was sure that no one could have seen us from there; and, knowing Martian customs, we had no intention of approaching it; nor would we have particularly cared to had it been safe, for the floor of the valley was so entrancingly beautiful in its natural state that the sights and sounds of a city would have proved a discordant note.

A short distance from us was a little river; and, beyond it, a forest came down to its edge. We crossed to the river on the scarlet sward, close-cropped by grazing herds and starred by many flowers of unearthly beauty.

A short distance down the river a herd of thoats was grazing. They were the beef variety, which is exceptionally good eating; and Pan Dan Chee suggested that we cross the river so that he could take advantage of the concealment of the forest to approach close enough to make a kill.

The river was simply alive with fish, and as we waded across I speared several with my long sword.

"At least we shall have fish for dinner," I said, "and if Pan Dan Chee is lucky, we shall have a steak."

"And in the forest I see fruits and nuts," said Llana. "What a banquet we shall have!"

"Wish me luck," said Pan Dan Chee, as he entered the forest to work his way down toward the thoats.

Llana and I were watching, but we did not see the young Orovaran again until he leaped from the forest and hurled something at the nearest thoat, a young bull. The beast screamed, ran a few feet, staggered and fell, while the rest of the herd galloped off.

"How did he do that?" asked Llana.

"I don't know," I said, "he did it so quickly that I couldn't see what it was he threw. It was certainly not a spear; because he hasn't one, and if it had been his sword we could have seen it."

"It looked like a little stick," said Llana.

We saw Pan Dan Chee cutting steaks from his kill; and presently he was back with us, carrying enough meat for a dozen men.

"How did you kill that thoat?" demanded Llana.

"With my dagger," replied Pan Dan Chee.

"It was marvelous," I said, "but where did you learn it?"

"Dagger throwing is a form of sport in Horz. We are all good at it, but I happen to have won the Jeddak's trophy

for the last three years; so I was pretty sure of my ground when I offered to get you a thoat, although I had never before used it to kill game. Very, very rarely is there a duel in Horz; and when there is, the contestants usually choose daggers, unless one of them is far more proficient than the other."

While Pan Dan Chee and I were making fires and cooking the fish and steaks, Llana gathered fruits and nuts; so that we had a delicious meal, and when night came we lay down on the soft sward and slept.

CHAPTER IV

We Enter the City

WE slept late, for we had been very tired the night before. I speared some fresh fish, and we had fish and steaks and fruit and nuts again for breakfast. Then we started toward the trail that leads out of the valley.

"It is going to be an awful climb," said Pan Dan Chee.

"Oh, I wish we didn't have to make it," said Llana; "I hate to leave this beautiful spot."

My attention was suddenly attracted toward the lower end of the valley.

"Maybe you won't have to leave it, Llana," I said. "Look!"

Both she and Pan Dan Chee turned and looked in the direction I had indicated, to see two hundred warriors mounted on thoats. The men were ebony black, and I wondered if they could be the notorious Black Pirates of Barsoom that I had first met and fought many years ago at the South Pole—the people who called themselves the First Born.

They galloped up and surrounded us; their spears couched, ready for any emergency.

"Who are you?" demanded their leader. "What are you doing in the Valley of the First Born?"

"We came down the trail to avoid a horde of green men," I replied. "We were just leaving. We came in peace; we do not want war, but we are still three swords ready to give a good account of ourselves."

"You will have to come to Kamtol with us," said the leader.

"The city?" I asked. He nodded.

I whipped my sword from its scabbard.

"Stop!", he said. "We are two hundred; you are three. If you come to the city there would be at least a chance that you won't be killed; if you stay here and fight you will be killed."

I shrugged. "It is immaterial to me," I said. "Llana of Gathol wishes to see the city, and I would just as leave fight. Pan Dan Chee, what do you and Llana say?"

"I would like to see the city," said Llana, "but I will fight if you fight. Perhaps," she added, "they will not be unkind to us."

"You will have to give up your arms," said the leader.

I didn't like that and I hesitated.

"It is that or death," said the leader. "Come; I can't stand here all day."

Well, resistance was futile; and it seemed foolish to sacrifice our lives if there were the remotest hope that we might be well received in Kamtol, and so we were taken on the backs of three thoats behind their riders and started for the beautiful white city.

THE ride to the city was uneventful, but it gave me an excellent opportunity to examine our captors more closely. They were unquestionably of the same race as Xodar, Dator of the First Born of Barsoom, to give him his full title, who had been first my enemy and then my friend during my strange

adventures among the Holy Therns.

They are an exceptionally handsome race, clean-limbed and powerful, with intelligent faces and features of such exquisite chiseling that Adonis himself might have envied them. I am a Virginian; and it may seem strange for me to say so, but their black skins, resembling polished ebony, add greatly to their beauty. The harness and metal of our captors was identical with that worn by the Black Pirates whose acquaintance I had made upon the Golden Cliffs above the Valley Dor.

My admiration of these people did not blind me to the fact that they are a cruel and ruthless race and that our life expectancy was reduced to a minimum by our capture.

Kamtol did not belie its promise. It was as beautiful on closer inspection as it had been at a distance. Its pure white outer wall is elaborately carved, as are the facades on many of its buildings. Graceful towers rise above its broad avenues, which, when we entered the city, were filled with people. Among the blacks, we saw a number of red men performing menial tasks. It was evident that they were slaves, and their presence suggested the fate which might await us.

I cannot say that I looked forward with any great amount of enthusiasm to the possibility that John Carter, Prince of Helium, Warlord of Mars, might become a street cleaner or a garbage collector. One thing that I noticed particularly in Kamtol was that the residences could not be raised on cylindrical columns, as is the case in most modern Martian cities, where assassination has been developed to a fine art and where assassins' guilds flourish openly, and their members swagger through the streets like gangsters in Chicago.

Heavily guarded, we were taken to a large building and there we were separated. I was taken to an apartment and seated in a chair with my back toward a strange looking machine, the face of which was covered with innumerable dials. A number of heavily insulated cables ran from various parts of the apparatus; metal bands at the ends of these cables were clamped about my wrists, my ankles, and my neck, the latter clamp pressing against the base of my skull; then something like a straight-jacket was buckled tightly around me, and I had a sensation as of countless needles touching my spine for almost its full length.

I thought that I was to be electrocuted, but it seemed to me that they took a great deal of unnecessary pains to destroy me. A simple sword thrust would have done it much more quickly.

An officer, who was evidently in charge of the proceedings, came and stood in front of me.

"You are about to be examined," he said, "you will answer all questions truthfully;" then he signaled to an attendant who threw a switch on the apparatus.

SO I was not to be electrocuted, but examined. For what, I could not imagine. I felt a very gentle tingling throughout my entire body, and then they commenced to hurl questions at me.

There were six men. Sometimes they questioned me singly and sometimes all at once. At such times, of course, I could not answer very intelligently because I could not hear the questions fully. Sometimes they spoke soothingly to me, and again they shouted at me angrily; often they heaped insults upon me.

They let me rest for a few moments, and then a slave entered the apartment with a tray of very tempting food which he offered to me. As I was about to

take it, it was snatched away; and my tormentors laughed at me.

They jabbed me with sharp instruments until the blood flowed, and then they rubbed the wounds with a burning caustic, after which they applied a salve that instantly relieved the pain. Again I rested and again food was offered me. When I made no move to attempt to take it, they insisted; and much to my surprise, let me eat it.

By this time I had come to the conclusion that we had been captured by a race of sadistic maniacs, and what happened next assured me that I was right. My torturers all left the apartment. I sat there for several minutes wondering at the whole procedure and why they couldn't have tortured me without attaching me to that amazing contraption. I was facing a door in the opposite wall, and suddenly the door flew open and a huge banth leaped into the room with a horrid roar.

This, I thought, is the end, as the great carnivore came racing at me. As suddenly as he had entered the room, he came to a stop a few feet from me, and so instantly that he was thrown to the floor at my feet. It was then that I saw that he was secured by a chain just a little too short to permit him to reach me. I had had all the sensations of impending death—a most refined form of torture. However, if that had been their purpose they had failed, for I do not fear death.

The banth was dragged out of the apartment by his chain and the door closed; then the examining board reentered smiling at me in the most kindly way."

"That is all," said the officer in charge; "the examination is over."

AFTER the paraphernalia had been removed from me, I was turned over to my guard and taken to the pits, such as are to be found in every Martian city, ancient or modern. These labyrinthine corridors and chambers are used for storage purposes and for the incarceration of prisoners, their only other tenants being the replusive ulsio.

I was chained to the wall in a large cell in which there was another prisoner, a red Martian; and it was not long until Llana of Gathol and Pan Dan Chee were brought in and chained near me.

"I see you survived the examination," I said.

"What in the world do they expect to learn from such an examination as that?" demanded Llana. "It was stupid and silly."

"Perhaps they wanted to find out if they could scare us to death," suggested Pan Dan Chee.

"I wonder how long they will keep us in these pits," said Llana.

"I have been here a year," said the red man. "Occasionally I have been taken out and put to work with other slaves belonging to the jaddaks, but until someone buys me I shall remain here."

"Buys you! What do you mean?" asked Pan Dan Chee.

"All prisoners belong to the jeddak," replied the red man, "but his nobles or officers may buy them if they wish another slave. I think he is holding me at too high a price, for a number of nobles have looked at me and said that they would like to have me."

He was silent for a moment and then he said, "You will pardon my curiosity, but two of you do not look like Barsoomians at all, and I am wondering from what part of the world you come. Only the woman is typical of Barsoom; both you men have white skin and one of you black hair and the other yellow."

"You have heard of the Orovars?" I asked.

"Certainly," he replied, "but they

have been extinct for ages."

"Nevertheless, Pan Dan Chee here is an Orovar. There is a small colony of them that has survived in a deserted Orovar city."

"And you?" he asked; "you are no Orovar, with that black hair."

"No," I said, "I am from another world—Jasoom."

"Oh," he exclaimed," can it be that you are John Carter?"

"Yes; and you?"

"My name is Jad-han. I am from Amhor."

"Amhor?" I said. "I know a girl from Amhor. Her name was Janai."

"What do you know of Janai?" he demanded.

"You knew her?" I asked.

"She was my sister; she has been dead for years. While I was out of the country on a long trip, Jal Had, Prince of Amhor, employed Gantum Gur, the assassin, to kill my father; because he objected to Jal Had as a suitor for Janai's hand. When I returned to Amhor, Janai had fled and later I learned of her death. In order to escape assassination myself, I was forced to leave the city. After wandering about for some time I was captured by the First Born. But tell me, what did you know of Jania?"

"I know that she is not dead," I replied. "She is mated with one of my most trusted officers and is safe in Helium."

JAD-HAN was overcome with happiness when he learned that his sister still lived. "Now," he said, "if I could escape from here and return to Amhor to avenge my father, I would die happy."

"Your father has been avenged," I told him. "Jal Had is dead."

"I am sorry that it was not given to me to kill him," said Jad-han.

"You have been here a year," I said, "and you must know something of the customs of the people. Can you tell us what fate may lie in store for us."

"There are several possibilities," he replied. "You may be worked as slaves, in which event you will be treated badly, but may be permitted to live for years; or you may be saved solely for the games which are held in a great stadium. There you will fight with men or beasts for the edification of the First Born. On the other hand, you may be summarily executed at any moment. All depends upon the mental vargaries of Doxus, Jeddak of The First Born, whom I think is a little mad."

"If the silly examination they gave us is any criterion," said Llana, "they are all mad."

"Don't be too sure of that," Jad-han advised. "If you realized the purpose of that examination, you would understand that it was never devised by any unsound mind. Did you see the dead men as you entered the valley?"

"Yes, but what have they to do with the examination?"

"They took that same examination; that is why they lie dead out there."

"I do not understand," I said. "Please explain."

"The machines to which you were connected recorded hundreds of your reflexes; and automatically recorded your own individual nerve index, which is unlike that of any other creature in the world.

"The master machine, which you did not see and never will, generates short wave vibrations which can be keyed exactly to your individual nerve index. When that is done you have such a severe paralytic stroke that you die almost instantly."

"But why all that just to destroy a few slaves?" demanded Pan Dan Chee.

"It is not for that alone," explained

Jad-han. "Perhaps that was one of the initial purposes to prevent prisoners from escaping and spreading word of this beautiful valley on a dying planet. You can imagine that almost any country would wish to possess it. But it has another purpose; it keeps Doxus supreme. Every adult in the valley has had his nerve index recorded, and is at the mercy of his jeddak. You don't have to leave the valley to be exterminated. An enemy of the jeddak might be sitting in his own home some day, when the thing would find him out and destroy him. Doxus is the only adult in Kamtol whose index has not been recorded; and he and one other man, Myrlo, are the only ones who know exactly where the master machine is located, or how to operate it. It is said to be very delicate and that it can be irreparably damaged in an instant—and can never be replaced."

"Why couldn't it be replaced?" asked Llana.

"The inventor of it is dead," replied Jad-han. "It is said that he hated Doxus; because of the purpose to which the jeddak had put his invention and that Doxus had him assassinated through fear of him. Myrlo, who succeeded him, has not the genius to design another such machine."

CHAPTER V

Sold as Slaves

THAT night, after Llana had fallen asleep, Jad-han, Pan Dan Chee, and I were conversing in whispers; so as not to disturb her.

"It is too bad," said Jad-han, who had been looking at the sleeping girl; "it is too bad that she is so beautiful."

"What do you mean?" asked Pan Dan Chee.

"This afternoon you asked me what your fate might be; and I told you what the possibilities might be, but those were the possibilities for you two men. For the girl—" He looked sorrowfully at Llana and shook his head; he did not need to say more.

The next day a number of the First Born came down into our cell and examined us, as one might examine cattle that one purposed buying. Among them was one of the jeddak's officers, upon whom devolved the duty of selling prisoners into slavery for the highest amounts he could obtain.

One of the nobles immediately took a fancy to Llana and made an offer for her. They haggled over the price for some time, but in the end the noble got her.

Pan Dan Chee and I were grief stricken as they led Llana of Gathol away, for we knew that we should never see her again. Although her father is Jed of Gathol, in her veins flows the blood of Helium; and the women of Helium know how to act when an unkind Providence reserves for them the fate for which we knew Llana of Gathol was intended.

"Oh! to be chained to a wall and without a sword when a thing like this happens," exclaimed Pan Dan Chee.

"I know how you feel," I said; "but we are not dead yet, Pan Dan Chee; and our chance may come yet."

"If it does, we will make them pay," he said.

Two nobles were bidding for me, and at last I knocked down to a dator named Xaxak. My fetters were removed, and the jeddak's agent warned me to be a good and docile slave.

Xaxak had a couple of warriors with him, and they walked on either side of me as we left the pits. I was the object of considerable curiosity, as we made our way toward Xaxak's palace, which stood near that of the jeddak. My

white skin and gray eyes always arouse comment in cities where I am not known. Of course, I am bronzed by exposure to the sun, but even so my skin is not the copper red of the red men of Barsoom.

Before I was taken to the slaves' quarters of the palace, Xaxak questioned me. "What is your name?" he asked.

"Dotar Sojat," I replied. It is the name given me by the green Martians who captured me when I first came to Mars, being the names of the first two green Martians I had killed in duels; and is in the nature of an honorable title. A man with one name, an o-mad, is not considered very highly. I was always glad that they stopped with two names, for had I had to assume the name of every green Martian warrior I had killed in a duel it would have taken an hour to pronounce them all.

"DID you say dator?" asked Xaxak. "Don't tell me that you are a prince!"

"I said Dotar," I replied. I hadn't given my real name; because I had reason to believe that it was well known to the First Born, who had good reason to hate me for what I had done to them in the Valley Dor.

"Where are you from?" he asked.

"I have no country," I said; "I am a panthan."

As these soldiers of fortune have no fixed abode, wandering about from city to city offering their services and their swords to whomever will employ them, they are the only men who can go with impunity into almost any Martian city.

"Oh, a panthan," he said. "I suppose you think you are pretty good with a sword."

"I have met worse," I replied.

"If I thought you were any good, I would enter you in the lesser games," he said; "but you cost me a lot of money, and I'd hate to take the chance of your being killed."

"I don't think you need worry about that," I told him.

"You are pretty sure of yourself," he said. "Well, let's see what you can do. Take him out into the garden," he directed the two warriors. Xaxak followed us out to an open patch of sward.

"Give him your sword," he said to one of the warriors; and, to the other, "Engage him, Ptang; but not to the death;" then he turned to me. "It is not to the death, slave, you understand. I merely wish to see how good you are. Either one of you may draw blood, but don't kill."

Ptang, like all the other Black Pirates of Barsoom whom I have met, was an excellent swordsman—cool, quick, and deadly. He came toward me with a faint, supercilious smile on his lips.

"It is scarcely fair, my prince," he said to Xaxak, "to pit him against one of the best swordsmen in Kamtol."

"That is the only way in which I can tell whether he is any good at all, or not," replied Xaxak. "If he extends you, he will certainly be good enough to enter in the Lesser Games. He might even win his price back for me."

"We shall see," said Ptang, crossing swords with me.

Before he realized what was happening, I had pricked him in the shoulder. He looked very much surprised, and the smile left his lips.

"An accident," he said; "it will not occur again;" and then I pinked him in the other shoulder. Now, he made a fatal mistake; he became angry. While anger may stiffen a man's offense, it weakens his defense. I have seen it happen a thousand times, and when I am anxious to dispatch an antagonist quickly I always try to make him angry.

"Come, come! Ptang," said Xaxak;

"can't you make a better showing than that against a slave?"

WITH that, Ptang came for me with blood in his eye, and I didn't see anything there that looked like a desire to pink---Ptang was out to kill me.

"Ptang!" snapped Xaxak; "don't kill him."

At that, I laughed; and drew blood from Ptang's breast.

"Have you no real swordsmen in Kamlot?" I asked, tauntingly.

Xaxak and his other warrior were very quiet. I caught glimpses of their faces occasionally, and they looked a bit glum. Ptang was furious, and now he came for me like a mad bull with a cut that would have lopped off my head had it connected. However, it didn't connect; and I ran him through the muscles of his left arm.

"Hadn't we better stop," I asked Xaxak, "before your man bleeds to death?"

Xaxak did not reply; but I was getting bored with the whole affair and wanted to end it; so I drew Ptang into a lunge, and sent his sword flying across the garden.

"Is that enough now?" I asked.

Xaxak nodded. "Yes," he said, "that is enough."

Ptang was one of the most surprised and crestfallen men I have ever seen. He just stood there staring at me, making no move to retrieve his blade. I felt very sorry for him.

"You have nothing to be ashamed of, Ptang," I told him. "You are a splendid swordsman, but what I did to you I can do to any man in Kamtol."

"I believe it," he said. "You may be a slave, but I am proud to have crossed swords wth you. The world has never seen a better swordsman."

"I am convinced of that," said Xaxak, "and I can see where you are going to make a lot of money for me, Dotar Sojat."

XAXAK treated me much as a wealthy horse owner on Earth would treat a prospective Derby winner. I was quartered in the barracks of his personal guard, where I was treated as an equal. He detailed Ptang to see that I had the proper amount of exercise and sword play; and also, I presume, to see that I did not try to escape. And now my only concern was the fate of Llana of Gathol and Pan Dan Chee, of whose whereabouts and state I was totally ignorant.

Somewhat of a friendship developed between Ptang and myself. He admired my swordsmanship, and used to brag about it to the other warriors. At first they had been inclined to criticize and ridicule him because he had been bested by a slave; so I suggested that he offer to let his critics see if they could do any better with me.

"I can't do that," he said, "without Xaxak's permission; for if anything happened to you, I should be held responsible."

"Nothing will happen to me," I told him; "no one should know that better than you."

He smiled a bit ruefully. "You are right," he said, "but still I must ask Xaxak;" and this he did the next time that he saw the dator.

In order to win Ptang's greater friendship, I had been teaching him some of the finer points of swordsmanship which I had learned in two worlds and in a thousand duels and battles; but by no means did I teach him all of my tricks, nor could I impart to him the strength and agility which my earthly muscles give me on Mars.

Xaxak was watching us at sword play when Ptang asked him if I might take on some of his critics. Xaxak shook

his head. "I am afraid that Dotar Sojat might be injured," he said.

"I will guarantee that I shall not be," I told him.

"Well," he said; "then I am afraid that you might kill some of my warriors."

"I promise not to. I will simply show them that they cannot last as long as Ptang did."

"It might be good sport," said Xaxak. "Who are those who criticized you, Ptang?"

Ptang gave him the names of five warriors who had been particularly venomous in their ridicule and criticism, and Xaxak immediately sent for them.

"I understand," said Xaxak, when they had assembled, "that you have condemned Ptang because he was bested in a duel with this slave. Do any of you think that you could do better than Ptang did?"

Ther assured him, almost in chorus, that they could do very much better.

"We shall see," he said, "but you must understand that no one is to be killed and that you are to stop when I give the word. It is an order."

They assured him that they would not kill me, and then the first of them swaggered out to meet me. One after another, in rapid succession, I pinked each in the right shoulder and disarmed him.

I MUST say they took it very decently; all except one of them—a fellow named Ban-tor, who had been Ptang's most violent critic.

"He tricked me," he grumbled. "Let me at him again, my dator; and I will kill him." He was so angry that his voice trembled.

"No," said Xaxak; "he has drawn your blood and he has disarmed you, demonstrating that he is the better swordsman. If it were due to a trick, it was a trick of swordsmanship which you might do well to master before you attempt to kill Dotar Sojat."

The fellow was still scowling and grumbling as he walked away with the other four; and I realized that while all of these First Born were my nominal enemies, this fellow, Ban-tor, was an active one. However, I gave the matter little thought as I was too valuable to Xaxak for anybody to risk his displeasure by harming me; nor could I see that there was any way in which the fellow could injure me.

"Ban-tor has always disliked me," said Ptang, after they had all left us. "He dislikes me because I have always bested him in swordsmanship and feats of strength; and, in addition to this, he is a natural born trouble maker. If it were not for the fact that he is related to Xaxak's wife, the dator would not have him around."

Since I have already compared myself to a prospective Derby winner, I might as well carry out the analogy by describing their Lesser Games as minor race meets. They are held about once a week in a stadium inside the city, and here the rich nobles pit their warriors or their slaves against those of other nobles in feats of strength, in boxing, in wrestling, and in duelings. Large sums of money are wagered, and the excitement runs high.

The duels are not always to the death, the nobles deciding beforehand precisely upon what they will place their bets. Usually it is for first blood or disarming; but there is always at least one duel to the death, which might be compared to the feature race of a race meet, or the main event of a boxing tournament.

Kamtol has a population of about two hundred thousand, of which possibly five thousand are slaves. As I was allowed considerable freedom, I got

around the city quite a bit; though Ptang always accompanied me, and I was so impressed with the scarcity of children that I asked Ptang what accounted for it.

The Valley of the First Born will only comfortably support about two hundred thousand population," he replied; "so only sufficient children are permitted to replace the death losses. As you may have guessed, by looking at our people, the old and otherwise unfit are destroyed; so that we have about sixty-five thousand fighting men and about twice as many healthy women and children.

"There are two factions here, one of which maintains that the number of women should be greatly decreased; so that the number of fighting men may be increased, while the other faction insists that, as we are not menaced by any powerful enemies, sixty-five thousand fighting men are sufficient.

"Strange as it may seem, most of the women belong to the first faction; notwithstanding the fact that this faction which believes in decreasing the number of females would do so by permitting a far greater number of eggs to incubate, killing all the females which hatched and as many of the adult women as there were males in the hatching. This is probably due to the fact that each woman thinks that she is too desirable to be destroyed and that that fate will fall to some other woman. Doxus believes in maintaining the *status quo;* but some future jeddak may believe differently; and even Doxus may change his mind, which, confidentially, is most vacillating."

MY fame as a swordsman soon spread among the sixty-five thousand fighting men of Kamtol, and opinion was most unevenly divided as to my ability. Perhaps a dozen men of Kamtol had seen my sword play; and they were willing to back me against anyone; but all the remainder of the sixty-five thousand felt that they could best me in individual combat; for this is a race of fighting men, all extremely proud of their skill and their valor.

I was exercising in the garden with Ptang one day, when Xaxad came with another dator, whom he called Nastor. When Ptang saw them coming, he whistled.

"I never saw Nastor here before," he said in a low tone of voice. "Xaxak has no use for him, and he hates Xaxak. Wait!" he exclaimed; "I have an idea why he is here. If they ask for sword play, let me disarm you. I will tell you why, later."

"Very well," I said, "and I hope it will do you some good."

"It is not for me," he said; "it is for Dator Xaxak."

As the two approached us, I heard Nastor say, "So this is your great swordsman! I should like to wager that I have men who could best him any day."

"You have excellent men," said Xaxak; "still, I think my man would give a good account of himself. How much of a wager do you want to lay?"

"You have seen my men fight," said Nastor, "but I have never seen this fellow at work. I would like to see him in action; then I shall know whether to ask or give odds."

"Very well," said Xaxak, "that is fair enough;" then he turned to us. "You will give the Dator Nastor an exhibition of your swordsmanship, Dotar Sojat; but not to the death—you understand?"

Ptang and I drew our swords and faced one another. "Don't forget what I asked of you," he said, and then we were at it.

I not only remembered what he had

asked, but I now realized why he had asked it; and so I put up an exhibition of quite ordinary swordsmanship, just good enough to hold my own until I let Ptang disarm me.

"He is an excellent swordsman," said Nastor, knowing that he was lying, but not knowing that we knew it; "but I will bet even money that my man can kill him."

"You mean a duel to the death?" demanded Xaxak; "then I shall demand odds; as I did not desire my man to fight to the death the first time he fought."

"I will give you two to one," said Nastor; "are those odds satisfactory?"

"Perfectly," said Xaxak. "How much do you wish to wager?"

"A thousand tanpi * to your five hundred," replied Nastor.

"I want to make more than enough to feed my wife's sorak," replied Xaxak.

NOW, a sorak is a little six-legged, cat-like animal, kept as a pet by many Martian women; so what Xaxak had said was equivalent to telling Nastor that we didn't care to fight for chicken feed. I could see that Xaxak was trying to anger Nastor; so that he would bet recklessly, and I knew then that he must have guessed that Ptang and I were putting on a show when I let Ptang disarm me so easily.

Nastor was scowling angrily. "I did not wish to rob you," he said; "but if you wish to throw your money away, you may name the amount of the wager."

"Just to make it interesting," said Xaxak, "I'll bet you fifty thousand tanpi against your hundred thousand."

This staggered Nastor for a moment; but he must have got to thinking how easily Ptang had disarmed me, for eventually he rose to the bait.

"Done!" he said; "and I am sorry for both you and your man," with which polite hypocricy he turned on his heel and left without another word.

Xaxak looked after him with a half smile on his lips; and when he had gone, turned to us. "I hope you were just playing a little game," he said, "for if you were not you may have lost me fifty thousand tanpi."

"You need not worry, my prince," said Ptang.

"I shall not worry unless Dotar Sojat worries," replied the dator.

"There is always a gamble in such an enterprise as this," I replied; "but I think that you got very much the best of the bargain, for the odds should have been the other way."

"At least you have more faith than I have," said Xaxak the dator.

CHAPTER VI

Duel to the Death

PTANG told me that he had never known more interest to be displayed in a duel to the death than followed the announcement of the wager between Xaxak and Nastor. "No common warrior is to represent Nastor," he said. "He has persuaded a dator to fight for him, a man who is considered the best swordsman in Kamtol. His name is Nolat. I have never before known of a prince fighting a slave; but they say that Nolat owes Nastor a great deal of money and that Nastor will cancel the debt if Nolat wins, which Nolat is sure that he will—he is so sure that he has pledged his palace to raise money to bet upon himself."

"Not such a stupid thing for him to do, after all," I said; "for if he loses he won't need a palace."

Ptang laughed. "I hope he doesn't

*A tanpi is equivalent to about $1 in United States money.—Ed.

need it," he said; "but don't be overconfident, for he is rated the best swordsman among the First Born; and there are supposed to be no better swordsmen in all Barsoom."

Before the day arrived that I was to fight Nastor, Xaxak and Ptang grew more and more nervous; as did all of Xaxak's warriors, who seemed to feel a personal interest in me—that is, with the exception of Bantor, whose enmity I had aroused by disarming him.

Ban-tor had placed a number of wagers against me; and he kept bragging about this, insisting that I was no match for Nolat and that I should be killed in short order.

I slept in a small room by myself on old, discarded furs, as befitted a slave. My room connected with that occupied by Ptang; and had only one door, which opened into Ptang's room. It was on the second floor of the palace and overlooked the lower end of the garden.

The night before the encounter I was awakened by a noise in my room, and as I opened my eyes I saw a man leap out of the window with a sword in his hand; but, as neither of Mars' two moons was in the sky, is was not light enough for me to be sure that I could recognize him; yet there was something very familiar about him.

The next morning I told Ptang about my nocturnal visitor. Neither of us, however, could imagine why anyone would want to enter my room in stealth, as I had nothing to steal.

"It might have been an assassin who wanted to stop the fight," suggested Ptang.

"I doubt that," I said; "for he had plenty of opportunity to kill me, as I didn't awaken until he was leaping through the window."

"You missed nothing?" asked Ptang.

"I had nothing to miss," I replied, "except my harness and weapons, and I am wearing them now."

Ptang finally suggested that the fellow may have thought that a female slave slept in the room; and when he found out his error, took his departure; and with that we dropped the matter from our minds.

WE went to the stadium about the fourth zode, and we went in style —in fact it was a regular pageant. There were Xaxak and his wife, with her female slave, and Xaxak's officers and warriors. We were all mounted on gaily caparisoned thoats; pennants waved above us, and mounted trumpeters preceded us. Nastor was there with the same sort of retinue. We all paraded around the arena to the accompaniment of "Kaors!" and growls— the kaors were applause and the growls were boos. I received a great many more growls than kaors, for after all I was a slave pitted against a prince, a man of their own blood.

There were some wrestling and boxing matches and a number of duels for first blood only, but what the people were waiting for was the duel to the death. People are very much alike everywhere. On Earth, they go to boxing matches hoping for blood and a knockout; they go to the wrestling matches hoping to see some one thrown out of the ring and crippled; and when they go to automobile races they hope to see somebody killed. They will not admit these things, but without the element of danger and the risk of death these sports wouldn't draw a hatful of people.

At last the moment came for me to enter the arena, and I did so before a most distinguished audience. Doxus, Jeddak of the First Born, was there with his Jeddara. The loges and boxes were crowded with the nobility of Kamtol. It was a gorgeous spectacle; the

I drew my sword as the Black Prince charged down on me

harnesses of the men and women were resplendent with precious metals and jewels, and from every vantage point flew pennants and banners.

Nolat was escorted to the jeddak's box and presented; then to the box of Xaxak, where he bowed; and last of all to the box of Nastor, for whom he was fighting.

I, being a slave, was not presented to the jeddak; but I was taken before Nastor; so that he could identify me as the individual against whom he had placed his wagers. It was, of course, a mere formality; but in accordance with the rules of the Games.

I had caught only a brief glimpse of Nastor's entourage as we had paraded around the arena; as they had been behind us; but now I got a good look at them, as I stood in the arena before Nastor, and I saw Llana of Gathol sitting there beside the dator. Now, indeed, would I kill Nastor's man!

Llana of Gathol gasped and started to speak to me; but I shook my head, for I was afraid she would call me by name, which might, here among the First Born, have been the equivalent of a death sentence. It was always a surprise to me that none of these men recognized me; for my white skin and gray eyes make me a marked man, and if any of them had been in the Valley Dor when I was there they must have remembered me. I was to learn later why none of these Black Pirates of Barsoom knew me.

"Why did you do that, slave?" demanded Nastor.

"Do what?" I asked him in a puzzled tone.

"Shake your head," he replied.

"Perhaps it is because I am nervous," I said.

"And well you may be, slave, for you are about to die," he snapped nastily.

I WAS taken then to a point in the arena opposite the jeddak's box. Ptang was with me, as a sort of a second, I suppose. They let us stand there alone for several minutes, presumably to shake my nerves; then Nolat approached, accompanied by another noble dator. There was a fifth man; possibly he might have been called a referee; although he didn't have much to do beside giving the signal for the duel to commence.

Nolat was a large, powerful man; and built like a fighter. He was a very handsome man, but with a haughty, supercilious expression. Ptang had told me that we were supposed to salute each other with our swords before we engaged; and as soon as I got in position, I saluted; but Nolat merely sneered and said, "Come, slave! You are about to die."

"You made a mistake, Nolat," I said, as we engaged.

"What do you mean?" he demanded, lunging at me.

"You should have saluted your better," I said, parrying his lunge. "Now it will go harder with you—unless you would like to stop and salute me as you should have at first."

"Insolent calot!" he growled, and thrust viciously at me.

For reply, I cut a gash in his left cheek. "I told you you should have saluted," I mocked.

Nolat became furious then, and come at me with the evident intention of ending the encounter immediately. I sliced him along the other cheek, then; and a moment later I carved a bloody cross upon his left breast, a difficult maneuver requiring exceptional agility and skill, since his right side was always presented to me, or always should have been had he been quick enough to follow my foot work.

That audience was as silent as

a tomb, except for the kaors from Xaxak's contingent. Nolat was bleeding profusely, and he had slowed down considerably.

Suddenly somebody shouted, "Death!" Then other voices took it up. They wanted the kill; and as it was quite evident that Nolat couldn't kill me, I assumed that they wished me to kill him. Instead, I disarmed him, sending his blade flying half way across the arena. The referee ran after it; at last I had given him something to do.

I turned to Nolat's second. "I offer the man his life," I said in a tone of voice loud enough to have been heard in any part of the stadium.

Immediately there were shouts of "Kaor!" and "Death!" The "Deaths" were in the majority.

"He offers you your life, Nolat," said the second.

"But the wagers must be paid precisely as though I had killed you," I said.

"It is to the death," said Nolat. "I shall fight."

Well, he was a brave man; and because of that I hated to kill him.

HIS sword was returned to him by now, and we fell to it again. This time Nolat did not smile nor sneer, and he had no nasty remarks to make to me. He was in deadly earnest, fighting for his life like a cornered rat. He was an excellent swordsman; but I do not think that he was the best swordsman among the First Born; for I had seen many of them fight before, and I could have named a dozen who could have killed him offhand.

I could have killed him myself any time that I had wished to, but somehow I couldn't bring myself to do it. It seemed a shame to kill such a good swordsman and such a brave man; so I pricked him a few times and disarmed him again. I did the same thing three more times; and then, while the referee was running after Nolat's sword again, I stepped to the jeddak's loge.

"What are you doing here, slave?" demanded an officer of the jeddaks guard.

"I come to ask for the life of Nolat," I replied. "He is a good swordsman and a brave man—and I am not a murderer; and it would be murder to kill him now."

"It is a strange request," said Doxus; "the duel was to the death; it must go on."

"I am a stranger here," I said, "but where I come from if a contestant can show fraud or chicanery he is awarded the decision without having to finish the contest."

"Do you mean to imply that there has been fraud or chicanery on the part of either the Dator Nastor or the Dator Nolat?" demanded Doxus.

"I mean to say that a man entered my room last night while I slept, took my sword, and left a shorter one in the scabbard. This sword is several inches shorter than Nolat's; I noticed it when we first engaged. It is not my sword, as Xaxak and Ptang can testify if they will examine it."

Doxus summoned Xaxak and Ptang and asked them if they could identify the sword. Xaxak said that he could only identify it as coming from his armory; that he did not know the sword that had been issued to me, but that Ptang did; then Doxus turned to Ptang.

"Is this the sword that was issued to the slave, Dotar Sojat?" he demanded.

"No; it is not," replied Ptang.

"Do you recognize it?"

"I do."

"To whom did it belong?"

"It is the sword of a warrior named

Ban-tor," replied Ptang.

THERE was nothing for Doxus to do but award the contest to me; and he also ordered that all bets be paid, just as though I had killed Nolat. That didn't set very well with Nastor, nor did the fact that Doxus made him pay over to Xaxak one hundred thousand tanpi in the jeddak's presence; then he sent for Ban-tor.

Doxus was furious; for the First Born hold their honor as fighting men very high, and the thing that had been done was a blot upon the escutcheons of them all.

"Is this the man who entered your room last night?" he asked me, and I noticed that he didn't add "slave" as he usually had.

"It was dark; and I only saw his back; there was something familiar about the fellow, but I couldn't identify him positively."

"Did you lay any wagers on this contest?" he asked Ban-tor.

"A few little ones, Jeddak," replied the man.

"On whom?"

"On Nolat."

Doxus turned to one of his officers. "Summon all those with whom Ban-tor wagered on this contest."

A slave was sent around the arena, shouting out the summons; and soon there were fifty warriors gathered before Doxus' loge. Ban-tor appeared most unhappy; as, from each of the fifty, Doxus gleaned the information that Ban-tor had wagered large sums with each, in some instances giving extremely big odds.

"You thought that you were betting on a sure thing, didn't you?" demanded Doxus.

"I thought that Nolat would win," replied Ban-tor; "there is no better swordsman in Kamtol."

"And you were sure that he would win against an antagonist with a shorter sword. You are a disgrace; you have dishonored the First Born. For punishment you will fight now with Dotar Sojat;" then he turned to me. "You may kill him; and before you engage him, I, myself, will see that your sword is as long as his; although it would be only fair were he to be compelled to fight with the shorter sword he gave to you."

"I shall not kill him," I replied, "but I shall put a mark upon him that he will carry through life to remind all men that he is a knave."

As we started to take our places before the loge of the jeddak, I heard bets being offered with odds as high as a hundred to one that I would win, and later I learned that even a thousand to one was offered without any takers; then, as we faced one another, I heard Nastor shout,

"I will lay no wager, but I'll give Ban-tor fifty thousand tanpi if he kills the slave." It appeared that the noble dator was wroth at me.

Ban-tor was no mean antagonist; for he was not only a good swordsman, but he was fighting for his life and fifty thousand tanpi. He didn't try any rushing tactics this time; but fought carefully, mostly on the defensive, waiting for me to make one little false move that would give him an opening; but I do not make false moves. It was he who made the false move; he thrust, following a feint, thinking to find me off balance.

I am never off balance. My blade moved twice with the swiftness of light, leaving an X cut deep in the center of Bantor's forehead; then I disarmed him.

Without even glancing at him again, I walked to Doxus' loge.

"I am satisfied," I said. "To bear

the scar of that cross through life is punishment enough. To me, it would be worse than death."

Doxus nodded assent; and then caused the trumpets to be blown to announce that the Games were over, after which he again turned to me.

"What country are you from?" he asked.

"I have no country; I am a panthan," I replied; "my sword is for sale to the highest bidder."

"I shall buy you, and thereby acquire your sword also," said the jeddak. "What did you pay for this slave, Xaxak?"

"One hundred tanpi," replied my owner.

"You got him too cheap," said Doxus; "I shall give you fifty tanpi for him." There is nothing like being a jeddak!

"It is my pleasure to present him to you," said Xaxak, magnanimously; I had already netted him a hundred thousand tanpi, and he must have realized that it would be impossible ever to get another wager placed against me.

I WELCOMED this change of masters; because it would take me into the palace of the jeddak, and I had been harboring a hair-brained scheme to pave the way for our eventual escape, that could only be successful if I were to have entry to the palace—that is, if my deductions were correct.

So John Carter, Prince of Helium, Warlord of Barsoom, came into the palace of Doxus, Jeddak of the First Born, as a slave; but a slave with a reputation. The warriors of the jeddak's guard treated me with respect; I was given a decent room; and one of Doxus' trusted under-officers was made responsible for me, just as Ptang had been in the palace of Xaxak.

I was at something of a loss to know why Doxus had purchased me. He must have known that he couldn't arrange a money duel for me, for who would be fool enough to place a man or a wager against one who had made several of the best swordsmen of Kamtol look like novices?

The next day I found out. Doxus sent for me. He was alone in a small room when I was escorted in, and he immediately dismissed the warrior who had accompanied me.

"When you entered the valley," he commenced, "you saw many skeletons, did you not?"

"Yes," I replied.

"Those men died trying to escape," he said. "It would be impossible for you to succeed any better than they. I am telling you this so that you won't make the attempt. You might think that by killing me you might escape in the confusion which would ensue; but you could not; you can never escape from the Valley of the First Born. However, you may live on here in comfort, if you wish. All that you have to do is teach me the tricks of swordsmanship with which you bested the finest swordsman of Kamtol. I, the jeddak, should be the greatest swordsman of all the First Born. I wish you to make me that, but I wish the instruction given in secret and no word of it ever to pass your lips on pain of instant death—and a most unpleasant death, I can assure you. What do you say?"

"I can promise the utmost discretion," I said, "but I cannot promise to make you the greatest swordsman among the First Born; the achievement of that will depend somewhat upon your own native ability. I will instruct you, however."

"You do not talk much like a poor panthan," he said. "You speak to me much as would a man who had been accustomed to speaking with jeddaks—

and as an equal."

"You may have much to learn about being a swordsman," I said, "but I have even more to learn about being a slave."

He grunted at that, and then arose and told me to follow him. We passed through a little door behind the desk at which he had been sitting, and down a ramp which led to the pits below the palace. At the foot of the ramp we entered a large, well lighted room in which were filing cases, a couch, several benches, and a table strewn with writing materials and drawing instruments.

"This is a secret apartment," said Doxus. "Only one person other than myself has access to it. We shall not be disturbed here. This other man of whom I spoke is my most trusted servant. He may come in occaionally, but he will not divulge our little secret. Let us get to work. I can scarcely wait until the day that I shall cross swords with some of those egotistical nobles who think that they are really great swordsmen. Won't they be surprised!"

CHAPTER VII

A Way to Escape?

NOW, I had no intention of revealing all of my tricks of swordsmanship to Doxus, although I might have as far as any danger to myself was concerned, for he could never equal me; because he could never match my strength or agility.

I had been practicing him in disarming an opponent, when a door opposite that from which we had entered the room opened; and a man came in. During the brief time that the door remained open, I saw beyond it a brilliantly lighted room; and caught a glimpse of what appeared to be an amazingly complicated machine. Its face was covered with dials, buttons, and other gadgets—all reminiscent of the machine to which I had been attached during the wierd examination I had received upon entry to the city.

At sight of me, the newcomer looked surprised. Here was I, a total stranger and evidently a slave, facing the Jeddak of the First Born with a naked blade in my hand. Instantly, the fellow whipped out a radium pistol; but Doxus forestalled a tragedy.

"It is all right, Myrlo," he said. "I am just taking some instruction in the finer points of swordsmanship from this slave. His name is Dotar Sojat; you will see him down here with me daily. What are you doing down here now? Anything wrong?"

"A slave escaped last night," said Myrlo.

"You got him, of course?"

'Just now. He was about half way up the escarpment, I think."

"Good!" said Doxus. "Resume, Dotar Sojat."

I was so full of what I had just heard and seen and what I thought that it all connoted that I had hard work keeping my mind on my work; so that I inadvertently let Doxus prick me. He was as pleased as Punch.

"Wonderful!" he exclaimed. "In one lesson I have been so improved that I have been able to touch you! Not even Nolat could do that. We will stop now. I give you the freedom of the city. Do not go beyond the gates." He went to the table and wrote for a minute; then he handed me what he had written. "Take this," he said; "it will permit you to go where you will in all public places and return to the palace."

He had written:

Dotar Sojat, the slave, is granted the freedom of the palace and the city.

Doxus,
Jeddak.

As I returned to my quarters, I determined to let Doxus prick me every day. I found Man-lat, the under-officer who had been detailed to look after me, alone in his room, which adjoined mine.

"Your duties are going to be lessened," I told him.

"What do you mean?" he asked.

I showed him the pass.

"Doxus must have taken a liking to you," he said. "I never before knew of a slave being given that much freedom, but don't try to escape."

"I know better than to try that. I saw the skeletons from the top to the bottom of the escarpment."

"We call them Myrlo's babies," said Man-lot; "he's so proud of them."

"Who is Myrlo?" I asked.

"Somebody you'll probably never see," replied Man-lot. "He sticks to his pots and his kettles, his lathes and drills and his drawing instruments."

"Does he live in the palace?" I asked.

"Nobody knows where he lives, unless it be the jeddak. They say he has a secret apartment in the palace, but I don't know about that. What I do know is that he's the most powerful man in Kamtol, next to Doxus; and that he has the power of life and death over every man and woman in the Valley of the First Born. Why, he could strike either one of us dead right while we are sitting here talking; and we'd never see what killed us."

I was even more convinced now than I had been before that I had found what I had hoped to in that secret room beneath the palace—but how to utilize the knowledge!

I IMMEDIATELY took advantage of my freedom to go out into the city, only a part of which I had seen during the short time that I had been out with Ptang. The guards at the palace gate were as surprised when they read my pass as Man-lat had been. Of course, pass or no pass, I was still an enemy and a slave—a person to be viewed with suspicion and contempt; but in my case the contempt was tempered by the knowledge that I had bested their best at swordsmanship. I doubt that you can realize in what high esteem a great swordsman is held everywhere on Mars. In his own country he is worshipped, as might be a Juan Belmonte in Spain or a Jack Dempsey in America.

I had not gone far from the palace, when I chanced to look up; and, to my surprise, saw a number of fliers dropping down toward the city. The First Born I had seen in the Valley Dor had all been flying men; but I had not before seen any fliers over the valley, and I had wondered.

Martian aeroplanes, being lighter than air, or in effect so; because of the utilization of that marvellous discovery, the ray of repulsion, which tends to push them away from the planet, can land vertically in a space but little larger in area than themselves; and I saw that the planes I was watching were coming down into the city at no great distance from the palace.

Fliers! I think that my heart beat a little faster at the sight of them. Fliers! A means of escape from the Valley of the First Born. It might take a great deal of scheming; and would certainly entail enormous risks; but if all went well with the other part of my plan, I would find a way—and a flier.

I made my way toward the point at which I had seen the fliers disappear behind the roofs of the buildings near me, and at last my search was rewarded. I came to an enormous building some three stories high, on the roof of which I could just see a part of a flier. Practically all hangars on Barsoom are on

the roofs of buildings, usually to conserve space in crowded, walled cities; so I was not surprised to find a hanger in Kamtol thus located.

I approached the entrance to the building, determined to inspect it and some of the ships if I could get in. As I stepped through the entrance, a warrior barred my way with drawn sword.

"Where do you think you're going, slave?" he demanded.

I showed him my pass.

He looked equally as surprised as the others had who had read it.

"This says the freedom of the palace and the city," he said; "it doesn't say the freedom of the hangars."

"They're in the city, aren't they?" I demanded.

He shook his head. "They may be in the city, but *I* won't admit you. I'll call the officer."

He did so, and presently the officer appeared. "So!" he exclaimed, when he saw me; "you're the slave who could have killed Nolat, but spared his life. What do you want here?"

I handed him my pass. He read it carefully a couple of times. "It doesn't seem possible," he said, "but then your swordsmanship didn't seem possible either. It is hard for me to believe it yet. Why, Nolat was considered the best swordsman in Kamtol; and you made him look like an old woman with one leg. Why do you want to come in here?"

"I want to learn to fly," I said, naively.

He slapped his thighs and laughed at that. "Either you are foolish, or you think we First Born are, if you have an idea that we would teach a slave to fly."

"Well, I'd like to come in and look at the fliers anyway," I said. "That wouldn't do any harm. I've always been interested in them."

He thought a moment; then he said, "Nolat is my best friend; you might have killed him, but you refused. For that I am going to let you come in."

"Thank you," I said.

THE first floor of the building was largely given over to shops where fliers were being built or repaired. The second and third floors were packed with fliers, mostly the small, swift ones for which the Black Pirates of Barsoom are noted. On the roof were four large battleships; and, parked under them, were a number of small fliers for which there was evidently no room on the floors below.

The building must have covered several acres; so there was an enormous number of planes hangared there. I could see them now, as I had seen them years before, swarming like angry mosquitoes over the Golden Cliffs of the Holy Therns; but what were they doing here? I had supposed that the First Born lived only in the Valley Dor, although the majority of Barsoomians still believe that they come from Thuria, the nearer moon. That theory I had seen refuted the time that Xodar, a Black Pirate, had nearly succumbed from lack of oxygen when I had flown too high while escaping from them, that time that Thuvia and I had escaped the therns during their battle with the Black Pirates. If a man can't live without oxygen, he can't fly back and forth between Thuria and Barsoom in an open flier.

The officer had sent a warrior along with me, as a precaution against sabotage, I suppose; and I asked this fellow why I had seen no ships in the air since I had come, except the few I had seen this day.

"We fly mostly at night," he replied, "so that our enemies cannot see where we take off from, nor where we land.

Those that you saw coming in a few minutes ago were visitors from Dor. That may mean that we are going to war, and I hope so. We haven't raided any cities for a long time. If it's to be a big raid, those from Dor and from Kamtol band together."

Some Black Pirates from the Valley Dor! Now, indeed, I might be recognized.

AS I walked away from the hangar building, I turned and looked back, studying every detail of the architecture; then I walked around the entire building, which covered a whole square, with avenues on all four sides. Like nearly all Martian buildings, this one was highly ornamented with deep carvings. It stood in a rather poor section of the city, although not far from the palace; and was surrounded by small and modest homes. They were probably the homes of the artisans employed around the hangar.

A little farther from the hangar a section of small shops began; and as I passed along, looking at the wares displayed, I saw something which brought me to a sudden stop, for it suggested a new accessory to my rapidly formulating plans for escape from the Valley of the First Born—from which none ever escaped. It is sometimes well not to be too greatly constrained by precedent.

I entered the shop and asked the proprietor the price of the article I wished. It was only three teepi, the equivalent of about thirty cents in United States money; but with the information came the realization that I had none of the money of the First Born.

The medium of exchange upon Mars is not dissimilar to our own, except that the coins are oval; and there are only three; the pi, pronounced pie, worth about one cent; the teepi, ten cents; and the tanpi, one dollar. These coins are oval; one of bronze, one of silver, and one of gold. Paper money is issued by individuals, much as we write a check, and is redeemed by the individual twice yearly. If a man issues more than he can redeem, the government pays his creditors in full; and the debtor works out the amount upon the farms, or in the mines, which are government owned.

I had with me money of Helium to the value of some fifty tanpi, and I asked the proprietor if he would accept a larger amount than the value of the article in foreign coin. As the value of the metal is equal to the value of the coin, he gladly accepted one dollar in gold for what was worth thirty cents in silver; and I placed my purchase in my pocket pouch and departed.

As I approached the palace, I saw a white skinned man ahead of me carrying a heavy burden on his back. Now, as far as I knew, there was only one other white skinned man in Kamtol; and that was Pan Dan Chee; so I hastened to overtake him.

Sure enough, it was the Orovar from Horz; and when I came up behind him and called him by name, he almost dropped his burden, so surprised was he.

"John Carter!" he exclaimed.

"Hush!" I cautioned; "my name is Dotar Sojat. If the First Born knew that John Carter was in Kamtol I hate to think what would happen to him. Tell me about yourself. What has happened to you since I last saw you?"

"I WAS purchased by Dator Nastor, who has the reputation of being the hardest master in Kamtol. He is also the meanest; he bought me only because he could buy me cheap, and he made them throw in Jad-han for good measure. He works us day and night, and feeds us very little—and poor food at that. Since he lost a hundred thou-

sand tanpi to Xaxak, it has been almost like working for a maniac.

"By my first ancestor!" he exclaimed suddenly; "so it was you who defeated Nolat and caused Nastor to lose all that money! "I didn't realize it until just now. They said the slave who won the contest was named Dotar Sojat, and that meant nothing to me until now—and I was a little slow in getting it, at that."

"Have you seen Llana of Gathol?" I asked him. "She was in Nastor's loge at the Games; so I presume she was purchased by him."

"Yes, but I have not seen her," replied Pan Dan Chee; "however, I have heard gossip in the slaves' quarters; and I am much worried by what is being whispered about the palace."

'What have you heard? I felt that she was in danger when I saw her in Nastor's loge. She is too beautiful to be safe."

"She was safe enough at first," said Pan Dan Chee, "as she was originally purchased by Nastor's principal wife. Everything was comparatively well for her until Nastor got a good look at her at the Games; then he tried to buy her from his wife. But she, Van-tija, refused to sell. Nastor was furious, and told Van-tija that he would take Llana anyway; so Van-tija has locked her in an apartment at the top of the tower of her own part of the palace, and has placed her personal guards at the only entrance. There is the tower, there," he said, pointing; "perhaps Llana of Gathol is looking down at us now."

As I looked up at the tower, I saw that it rose above a palace which stood directly across the large central plaza from that of the jaddak; and I saw something else—I saw that the windows of Llana's apartments were not barred.

"Do you think that Llana is in any immediate danger?" I asked.

"Yes," he replied, "I do. It is rumored in the palace that Nastor is going to lead warriors to Van-tija's section of the palace and attempt to take the tower by storm."

"Then we have no time to lose, Pan Dan Chee. We must act tonight."

"But what can we two slaves do?" he demanded. "Even if we succeeded in getting Llana out of the tower, we could never escape from the Valley of the First Born. Do not forget the skeletons, John Carter."

"Trust me," I said, "and don't call me John Carter. Can you get out of the palace of Nastor after dark?"

"I think so; they are very lax; because assassination and theft are practically unknown here, and the secret machine of the jeddak makes escape from the valley impossible. I am quite sure that I can get out. In fact, I have been sent out on errands every night since I was purchased."

"Good!" I said. "Now listen carefully: Come out of the palace and loiter in the shadows near Nastor's palace at about twenty-five xats after the eighth zode *. Bring Jad-han with you, if he wishes to escape. If my plan succeeds, a flier will land here in the plaza near you; run for it and climb aboard. It will be piloted by a Black Pirate, but don't let that deter you. If you and Jad-han can arm yourselves, do so; there may be fighting. If the flier does not come, you will know that I have failed; and you can go back to your quarters and be no worse off. If I do not come, it will be because I am dead, or about to die."

"And Llana?" he asked. "What of her?"

My plans all center around the rescue of Llana of Gathol," I assured him. "If I fail in that, I fail in all; for I will not leave without her."

*Midnight, Earth time—Ed.

"I wish you could tell me how you expect to accomplish the impossible," he said. "I should feel very much surer of the outcome, I know, if you would tell me at least something of your plans."

"Certainly," I said. "In the first place—"

"WHAT are you two slaves doing loitering here?" demanded a gruff voice behind us. I turned to see a burly warrior at my shoulder. For answer, I showed him my pass from the jeddak.

Even after he read it, he looked as though he didn't believe it; but presently he handed it back to me and said, "That's all right for you, but how about this other one? Has he got a pass from the jeddak, too?"

"The fault is mine," I said. "I knew him before we were captured, and I stopped him to ask how he was faring. I am sure if the jeddak knew, he would say that it was all right for me to talk with a friend. The jeddak has been very kind to me." I was trying to impress the fellow with the fact that his jeddak was very kindly disposed toward me. I think that I succeeded.

"Very well," he said, "but get on your way now—the Great Plaza is no place for slaves to visit with one another."

Pan Dan Chee picked up his burden and departed, and I was about to leave when the warrior detained me.

"I saw you defeat Nolat and Ban-tor at the Games," he said. "We were talking about it a little while ago with some of our friends from the Valley Dor. They said that there was once a warrior came there who was just such a marvellous swordsman. His name was John Carter, *and he had a white skin and gray eyes!* Could your name, by any chance, be John Carter?"

"My name is Dotar Sojat," I replied.

"Our friends from the Valley Dor would like to get hold of John Carter," he said; and then, with a rather nasty little smile, he turned on his heel and left me.

CHAPTER VIII

A Challenge from Dor

NOW indeed was the occasion for haste increased a hundred fold. If one man in Kamtol suspected that I might be John Carter, Prince of Helium, I should be lost by the morrow at the latest—perhaps before the morrow. Even as I entered the palace I feared arrest, but I reached my room without incident.

Presently Man-lat came in; and at sight of him I expected the worst, for he had never visited me before. My sword was ready to leap from its scabbard, for I had determined to die fighting rather than let them arrest and disarm me. Even now, if Man-lat made a false move, I could kill him; and there might still be a chance that my plan could move on to successful fruition.

But Man-lat was in a friendly, almost jovial mood.

"It is too bad that you are a slave," he said, "for there are going to be great doings in the palace tonight. Doxus is entertaining the visitors from Dor. There will be much to eat and much to drink, and there will be entertainment. Doxus will probably have you give an exhibition of sword play with one of our best swordsman—not to the death, you understand, but just for first blood.

"Then there will be dancing by slave girls; the nobles will enter their most beautiful. Doxus has commanded Nastor to bring a new purchase of his

whose beauty has been the talk of Kamtol since the last games. Yes, it is too bad that you are not a First Born; so that you might enjoy the evening to the full."

"I am sure I shall enjoy the evening," I said.

"Didn't you say that I was going to be there?"

"Oh, yes; but only as an entertainer. You will not eat nor drink with us, and you will not see the slave girls. It is really too bad that you are not a First Born; you would have been a credit to us."

"I feel that I am quite the equal of any of the First Born," I said, for I was pretty well fed up with their arrogance and conceit.

Man-lat looked at me in pained surprise. "You are presumptious, slave," he said. "Do you not know that the First Born of Barsoom, sometimes known to you lesser creatures as The Black Pirates of Barsoom, are of the oldest race on the planet. We trace our lineage, unbroken, direct to the Tree of Life which flourished in the Valley Dor twenty-three million years ago.

"For countless ages the fruit of this tree underwent the gradual changes of evolution, passing by degrees from true plant life to a combination of plant and animal. In the first stages of this phase, the fruit of the tree possessed only the power of independent muscular action, while the stem remained attached to the parent plant; later, a brain developed in the fruit; so that, hanging there by their long stems, they thought and moved as individuals.

"Then, with the development of perceptions, came a comparison of them; judgments were reached and compared, and thus reason and the power to reason were born upon Barsoom.

"Ages passed. Many forms of life came and went upon the Tree of Life, but still all were attached to the parent plant by stems of varying lengths. In time the fruit upon the tree consisted of tiny plant men, such as we now see reproduced in such huge dimensions in the Valley Dor; but still hanging to the limbs and branches of the Tree by the stems which grew from their heads.

"The buds from which the plant men blossomed resembled large nuts about a sofad * in diameter, divided by double partition walls into four sections. In one section grew the plant man; in another a sixteen-legged worm; in the third the progenitor of the white ape; and in the fourth, the primeval black man of Barsoom.

"When the bud burst, the plant man remained dangling at the end of his stem; but the three other sections fell to the ground, where the efforts of their imprisoned occupants to escape sent them hopping about in all directions.

"Thus, as time went on, all Barsoom was covered by these imprisoned creatures. For countless ages they lived long lives within their hard shells, hopping and skipping about the broad planet; falling into rivers, lakes, and seas to be still farther spread about the surface of the new world.

"Countless billions died before the first black man broke through his prison walls into the light of day. Prompted by curiosity, he broke open other shells; and the peopling of Barsoom commenced.

"The pure strain of the blood of this first black man has remained untainted by admixture with that of other creatures; but from the sixteen legged worm, the first white ape, and renegade black men has sprung every other form of life upon Barsoom."

I hoped he was through, for I had

*11.17 Earth inches.—Ed.

heard all this many times before; but, of course, I didn't dare tell him so. I wished he would go away—not that I could do anything until after dark, but I just wanted to be alone and replan every minutest detail of the night's work that lay before me.

AT last he went; and at long last night came, but I must still remain inactive until about two hours before the time that I had told Pan Dan Chee to be prepared to climb aboard a flier piloted by a Black Pirate. I was betting that he was still puzzling over that.

The evening wore on. I heard sounds of revelry coming from the first floor of the palace through the garden upon which my window opened—the jeddak's banquet was in full swing. The zero hour was approaching—and then malign Fate struck. A warrior came, summoning me to the banquet hall!

I should have killed him and gone on about my business, but suddenly a spirit of bravado possessed me. I would face them all, let them see once more the greatest swordsman of two worlds, and let them realize, when I had escaped them, that I was greater in all ways than the greatest of the First Born. I knew it was foolish; but now I was following the warrior toward the banquet hall; the die was cast, and it was too late to turn back.

No one paid any attention to me as I entered the great room—I was only a slave. Four tables, forming a hollow square, were filled with men and women, gorgeously trapped. They were talking and laughing; and wine was flowing, and a small army of slaves was bearing more food and more wine. Some of the guests were already a little bit high, and it was evident that Doxus was holding his own with the best of them. He had his arm about his wife, on one side; but he was kissing another man's wife on the other.

The warrior who had fetched me went and whispered in the jeddak's ear, and Doxus banged a huge gong for silence. When they had quieted down, he spoke to them: "For long the First Born of the Valley Dor have boasted of their swordsmanship; and, in contests, I admit that they have proved that they possess some slight superiority over us; but I have in my palace a slave, a common slave, who can best the best swordsman from Dor. He is here now to give an exhibition of his marvellous ability in a contest with one of my nobles; not to the death, but for first blood only—unless there be one from Dor who believes that he can best this slave of mine."

A noble arose. "It is a challenge," he said. "Dator Zithad is the best swordsman here from Dor tonight; but if he will not meet a slave, I will for the honor of Dor. We have heard of this slave since we arrived in Kamtol, how he bested your best swordsmen; and I for one shall be glad to draw his blood."

Then Zithad arose, haughtly and arrogant. "I have never sullied my sword with the blood of a slave," he said, "but I shall be glad to expunge the shame of Kamtol. Where is the knave?"

Zithad! He had been Dator of the Guards of Issus at the time of the revolt of the slaves and the overthrow of Issus. He had good reason to remember me and to hate me.

When we faced each other in the center of that hollow square in the banquet hall of Doxus, Jeddak of the First Born of Kamtol, he looked puzzled for a moment, and then stepped back. He opened his mouth to speak.

"So, you are afraid to meet a slave!" I taunted him. "Come! they want to see you spill my blood; let's not disappoint them." I touched him lightly

with my point.

"Calot!" he growled, and came for me.

HE was a better swordsman than Nolat, but I made a monkey of him. I backed him around the square, keeping him always on the defensive; but I drew no blood—yet. He was furious—and he was afraid. The audience sat in breathless silence.

Suddenly he screamed: "Fools! Don't you know who this slave is? He is—" Then I ran him through the heart.

Instantly pandemonium reigned. A hundred swords sprang from their scabbards, but I waited to see no more—I'd seen plenty! With drawn sword, I ran straight for the center of one of the tables; a woman screamed. In a single bound I cleared the table and the diners, and bolted through the door behind them into the garden.

Of course, they were after me instantly; but I dodged into the shrubbery, and made my way to a point beneath my window at the lower end of the garden. It was scarcely a fifteen foot jump to the sill, and a second later I had passed through my room and down a ramp to the floor below.

It was dark, but I knew every inch of the way to my goal. I had prepared for just some such eventuality. I reached the room in which Doxus had first interviewed me, and passed through the doorway behind the desk and down the ramp to the secret chamber below.

I knew that no one would guess where I had gone; and as Myrlo was doubtless at the banquet, I should be able to accomplish with ease that which I had come here to do.

As I opened the door into the larger room, Myrlo arose from the couch and faced me.

"What are you doing here, slave?" he demanded.

HERE was a pretty pass! Everything seemed to be going wrong; first, the summons to the banquet hall; then Zithad, and now Myrlo. I hated to do it, but there was no other way.

"Draw!" I said. I am no murderer; so I couldn't kill him unless he had a sword in his hand, but Myrlo was not so ethical—he reached for the radium pistol at his hip. Fatal error! I crossed the intervening space in a single bound; and ran Myrlo, the inventor of Kamtol, through the heart.

Without even waiting to wipe the blood from my blade, I ran into the smaller room. There was the master mechanism that held two hundred thousand souls in thrall, the hideous invention that had strewn the rim of the great rift with mouldering skeletons.

I looked about and found a heavy piece of metal; then I went for that insensate monster with all the strength and enthusiasm that I possess. In a few minutes it was an indescribable jumble of bent and broken parts—a total wreck.

Quickly I ran back into the next room, stripped Myrlo's harness and weapons from his corpse and removed my own; then from my pocket pouch I took the article that I had purchased in the little shop. It was a jar of the ebony black cream with which the women of the First Born are wont to conceal the blemishes upon their glossy skins.

In ten minutes I was as black as the blackest Black Pirate that ever broke a shell. I donned Myrlo's harness and weapons; and, except for my gray eyes, I was a noble of the First Born. I was glad now that Myr-lo had not been at the banquet, for his harness would help to pass me through the palace and out

of it, an ordeal that I had not been looking forward to with much relish; for I had been wearing the harness of the commonest of common warriors, and I very much doubted that they passed in and out of the palace late at night without being questioned—and I had no answers.

I got through the palace without encountering anyone, and when I approached the gate I commenced to stagger. I wanted them to think that a slightly inebriated guest was leaving early. I held my breath as I approached the warriors on guard; but they only saluted me respectfully, and I passed out into the avenues of Kamtol.

My plan had been to climb the facade of the hangar building, which I could have done because of the deep carving of its ornamentation; but that would probably have meant a fight with the guard on the roof as I clambered over the cornice. Now, I determined to try another, if no less hazardous, plan.

I walked straight to the entrance. There was but a single warrior on guard there. I paid no attention to him, but strode in. He hesitated; then he saluted, and I passed on and up the ramp. He had been impressed by the gorgeous trappings of Myrlo, the noble.

My greatest obstacle to overcome now was the guard on the roof, where I had no doubt but that I should find several warriors. It might be difficult to convince them that even a noble would go flying alone at this time of night, but when I reached the roof there was not a single warrior in sight.

It took me but a moment to find the flier I had selected for the adventure when I had been there before, and but another moment to climb to its controls and start the smooth, silent motor.

THE night was dark; neither moon was in the sky, and for that I was thankful. I rose in a steep spiral until I was high above the city; then I headed for the tower of Nastor's palace where Llana of Gathol was imprisoned.

The black hull of the flier rendered me invisible, I was sure, from the avenues below on a dark night such as this; and I came to the tower with every assurance that my whole plan had worked out with amazing success, even in spite of the ontoward incidents that had seemed about to wreck it in its initial stages.

As I drew slowly closer to the windows of Llana's apartment, I heard a woman's muffled scream and a man's voice raised in anger. A moment later the prow of my ship touched the wall just below the window; and, seizing the bow line, I leaped across the sill into the chamber, Myrlo's sword in my hand.

Across the room, a man was forcing Llana of Gathol back upon a couch. She was striking at him, and he was cursing her.

"Enough!" I cried, and the man dropped Llana and turned toward me. It was Nastor, the dator.

"Who are you?" he demanded. "What are you doing here?"

"I am John Carter, Prince of Helium," I replied; "and I am here to kill you."

He had already drawn, and our swords crossed even as I spoke.

"Perhaps you will recall me better as Dotar Sojat, the slave who cost you one hundred thousand tanpi," I said; "the prince who is going to cost you your life."

He commenced to shout for the guard, and I heard the sound of running footsteps which seemed to be coming up a ramp outside the door. I saw that I must finish Nastor quickly; but he proved a better swordsman than I had expected, although the encounter

quickly developed into a foot race about the chamber.

The guard was coming closer when Llana darted to the door and pushed a heavy bolt into place; and not a moment too soon, for almost immediately I heard pounding on the door and the shouts of the warriors outside; and then I tripped upon a fur that had fallen from the couch during the struggle between Llana and Nastor, and I went down upon my back. Instantly Nastor leaped for me to run me through the heart. My sword was pointed up toward him, but he had all the advantage.

I was about to die.

Only Llana's quick wit saved me. She leaped for Nastor from the rear and seized him about the ankles. He pitched forward on top of me, and my sword went through his heart, two feet of the blade protruding from his back.

It took all my strength to wrest it free again.

"Come, Llana!" I said.

"Where to?" she asked. "The corridor is full of warriors."

"The window," I said. "Come!"

AS I turned toward the window, I saw the end of my line, that I had dropped during the fight, disappear over the edge of the sill. My ship had drifted away, and we were helplessly trapped.

I ran to the window. Twenty-five feet away, and a few feet below the level of the sill, floated escape and freedom, floated life for Llana of Gathol, for Pan Dan Chee, for Jad-han, and for me.

There was but a single hope. I stepped to the sill, measured the distance again with my eyes—and jumped. That I am narrating this adventure must assure you that I landed on the deck of that flier.

A moment later the flier was beside the sill again, and Llana was safely aboard.

"Pan Dan Chee!" she said. "What has become of him. It seems cruel to abandon him to his fate."

Pan Dan Chee would have been the happiest man in the world could he have known that her first thought was for him, but I knew that the chances were that she would snub or insult him the first opportunity she had—women are peculiar that way.

I dropped swiftly toward the plaza.

"Where are you going?" demanded Llana. "Aren't you afraid we'll be captured down there?"

"I am going for Pan Dan Chee," I said, and a moment later I landed close to Nastor's palace, and two men dashed from the shadows toward the ship. They were Pan Dan Chee and Jad-han.

As soon as they were aboard, I rose swiftly; and headed for Gathol. I could feel Pan Dan Chee looking at me. Finally he could contain himself no longer.

"Who are you?" he demanded; "and where is John Carter?"

"I am now Myrlo, the inventor," I said; "a short time ago I was Dotar Sojat the slave; but always I am John Carter.

"We are all together again," he said, "and alive; but for how long? Have you forgotten the skeletons on the rim of the rift?"

"You need not worry," I assured him. "The mechanism that put them there has been destroyed."

He turned to Llana.

"Llana of Gathol," he said, "we have been through much together; and there is not telling what the future holds for us. Once again I lay my heart at your feet."

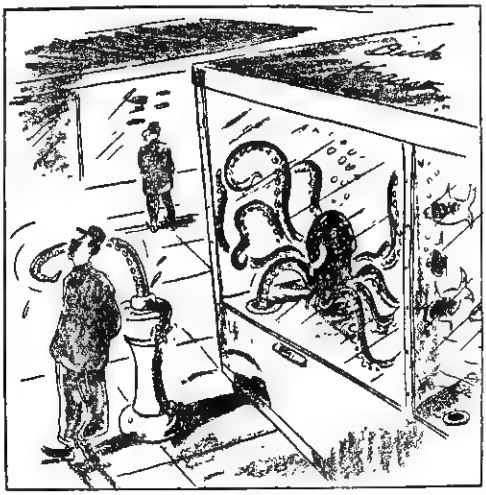
"You may pick it up," said Llana of Gathol; "I am tired and wish to sleep."

(Continued from page 7)

YOUR editors want especially to call your attention to our companion magazine, *Fantastic Adventures,* which is now published each month, for the June issue, on sale April 20th. It features once more the increasingly famous "Mac Girl" created by H. W. McCauley, our popular cover artist

The cover is based on Ray Cummings' latest, and one of his best, stories, "Onslaught of the Druid Girls." It is perhaps better than his "The Fire People" of quite a few years ago, and is written in the same style that made him a favorite in his field. Don't miss either this grand story, or this marvelous cover painting.

MANY of our readers have asked for an autobiography of Edgar Rice Burroughs. Therefore, we asked Mr Burroughs to write one for us. We present it in this issue, together with two pictures. We think it will give you a good idea of what Mr. Burroughs is like, and the background for the amazing Mr. Carter, Tarzan, et al.



"Oh pshaw. Nothing ever happens around here."

SOMETIMES the things Americans do is an amazing story in reality rather than in imagination. Take for instance our military "secrets." Sh-h-h! Keep it dark!

Briefly, Joseph Lyman, of Huntington, N. Y., has taken out a patent on an enemy aircraft detector, for use in darkness and in murky, foggy weather. The device makes use of very short radio waves—600 megacycles—focused by parabolic reflectors into beams. These beams, directed into the sky, bounce back when they hit metal

The reflected signal is picked up by a coordinated parabolic receiver, and appears as a moving spot of light in a cathode ray tube. Thus the plane's course is charted.

Then anti-aircraft batteries go into action. Speculation is rife that Lyman's detector can be adapted for use by defending interceptor planes.

Perhaps a British version of this device is the reason for increased success recently against Nazi night raiders.

How do we know all this? Easy. All the details of this great military secret are available to any interested person at the U. S. Patent Office, in Washington, D. C.

OIL and water won't mix, eh? Well, you, and we, are wrong again! And it's all because of the lowly cranberry.

Caught in the inexorable march of science, this little berry has now had its skin, its pulp, its pit —oops, no pits, what a shame, we could have put them to some use—converted into a new, and far distant from its original, use.

Even its small seeds, which yield cranberry-seed oil (how strange!) aren't wasted Vitamin A may be, in its turn, extracted from the oil. Ursolic acid is taken from the skins.

Ursolic acid? Oh yes, it's used for that stunt we talked about—oil mixed with water. Don't ask us how it does it, it just does.

What we want to know is why? Unless it's the castor oil with the grapefruit! In which case we're not interested!

CASTING around the world, we find a happy people! Oh my, and in these days! The dictators should know!

These happy people are none other than the Eskimos, that nomadic race of the frozen tundras, where, to give you our opinion, we'd scarcely expect to find *ourselves* exactly happy But here's why they *are* happy and contented.

The main reason is a rather satiric one. They are about 20,000 years behind the times. In the first place, they don't "think" at all in the usual sense of the term. An Eskimo can't concentrate on any one problem for more than twenty minutes at a time. He has no sense of time or hurry. He never bothers to provide against the future.

During the summer, Eskimo tribes are afflicted with insomnia and generally restless. But during the long, harsh winter they perk up and really enjoy living.

Perfectly adapted to the rigors of Arctic winter, almost every waking moment is spent in foraging for food. The average Eskimo family and its dogs will consume fifty pounds of meat per day. Authorities say there is practically nothing he can't digest. He eats seal, caribou, raw fish—preferably a little rotten, for flavor—and he drinks tea. But he's happy!

So long, readers. See you next month. *Rap*

LOST TREASURE OF ANGKOR

By James Norman

The Khymer treasure had been sealed in the box for centuries, unopened, yet it was gone; and in its place—the picture of a modern ball player!

ARCHEOLOGIST JACKSON tried to be as cool about the discovery of the strange copper box as the shimmering tropical heat would allow. He wiped a feverish brow while watching Duval finish photographing it.

"The Khymer treasure, at last! And this is it," he caught himself repeating incredulously. "Step on it, Duval. Cut the photos. Let's open it."

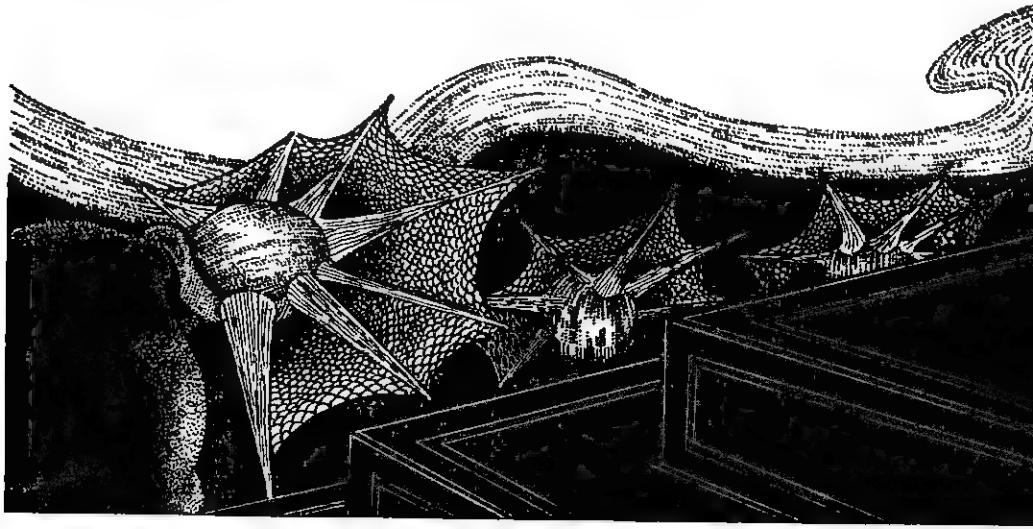
Duval smiled. Sweat poured down his fat face.

"She has waited six hundred years to be opened," he answered. "What is five minutes more against so long?"

His camera clicked on with annoying regularity.

Jackson's excited gaze swept from the treasure box placed on a table before their tent to the five massive stone temple towers of Angkor Vat.

The buildings of a mysterious, vanished civilization rose dizzily into the molten sky. Master builders those Khymers had been!—carved roofs, crumbling columns and step-pyramids of the lost metropolis shouldered above the cocoanut and fromanger trees of



the Cambodian jungle like a mirage.

Jackson's gaze shifted back to the box.

It was a large ornate chest, heavy and encrusted with age. Time had sealed it seven centuries ago. Now its contents, the jewels of an empire, would again flash in the light of day.

Jackson could hardly believe that he and Duval had unearthed it in the mysterious vaults beneath the main Angkor temple. He ran his fingers feverishly over the royal seal barely visible on the lid.

"Yaya Varman's emblem," he commented excitedly. "Yaya Varman, the last king of the Khymers."

Plump little Duval glanced up.

"The legend, she is right," he nodded, setting aside his camera quickly. "We find the treasure where she say. Now we have the honor to make history. Quick! We open her. We look at the jewels—then I make more pictures."

Jackson's chisel was already eagerly at work chipping away the blueish rust and corrosion until the lip of the copper box stood bare.

"Give me a hand, Duval—quick."

Duval's agile fingers pushed against the lid. It gave suddenly, slipping off in a shower of rust flakes. Duval gasped!

Jackson's gaze swept into the box. Then he dropped the lid to the ground and blinked incredulously. His vision dimmed a second and his jaw relaxed abnormally. *The treasure box was empty!*

"We've been robbed!" Duval cried angrily.

Jackson licked his dry lips, trying to control his emotions. His burning eyes dropped to the box again as if he were half expecting the treasure to appear. Then he noticed the packet bound in hide.

As his fumbling fingers unwrapped the packet, a silver ring rolled across the table. Duval snatched it up. The Frenchman suddenly let out a frustrated roar. He shoved the ring under Jackson's nose.

"What kind of joke is this?" he demanded. "The ring—Harvard, Class of '34."

"A Harvard ring, here?" gasped Jackson.

He stared in amazement at the silver band. Then his eyes searched the remainder of the packet. It included a manuscript written on dry yellow papyrus. The sheets were clipped at the corner with a college fraternity pin.

Then he sucked his breath in sharply. *The manuscript was written in English!*

"Now, I go mad!" shouted Duval, tearing at his hair with stubby fingers. "Look at this photograph—a baseball player!"

FANTASTIC, but the stuff was there. In addition to the manuscript, the Harvard ring and the enameled fraternity pin, the packet contained the broken hilt of a beautiful cobra headed emerald dagger. And there was that astonishing photograph!

It had been cut out of the sport section of a newspaper. It was brown with age, yet it clearly revealed the face and shoulders of a sandy-haired young man whose mouth was curled in a good natured smile. He wore a baseball uniform. Beneath it was printed the single line:

Rip Corry, Detroit's Ace Hurler

"Corry is the fellow who disappeared. Remember the broadcast?" Jackson cried. "I wonder if. . . No, it's utterly impossible!"

"It's mad!" Duval cut in vehemently.

"This treasure box hasn't been opened for over six hundred years," said Jackson. "I'll swear to that or

I'm no archeologist."

"Nonsense," spat Duval. "Read the paper, the papyrus."

Jackson hastily flattened the sheets of papyrus and began reading the few lines of hurried scrawl at the top of the first page:

"Angkor Vat, 1278 a.d. This is an SOS—I, Gregg Lee, and my companion, Rip Corry, urgently request the finder of this material to immediately contact the American Science Society. If we die on this expedition you may still be able to save us!"

Duval whistled unbelievingly.

"Gregg Lee!" snapped Jackson. "I know him well. He's a young physicist. He works in the States."

"It's a joke," said Duval. "A hoax! There were no Americans in the year 1278. I am angry. I will make a scandal over this."

"Hold it," said Jackson. "Gregg Lee is no man to pull a hoax like this. I tell you, I think this is serious. This box hasn't been opened in six hundred years. Lee and Corry were in Angkor Vat. Where they are now—God only knows."

Duval clapped his stubby hand across his forehead and sat down. He reached for the medical kit and a bottle of cognac.

"Pull yourself together," snapped Jackson. "Let me finish this manuscript. . . My god, do you realize 1278 was the date the Khymer inscription on the temples stopped at? That's the time their empire vanished—three million people walked right out of their cities and disappeared." *

"Enough!" Duval exploded. "That's history. Read the manuscript, quick!"

Jackson held the papyrus tightly in his hands and began reading Gregg Lee's manuscript in an excited, awed voice.

* * *

CHAPTER II

Gregg Lee's Manuscript

ANGKOR VAT, 1278 a.d. This adventure of Rip Corry and myself began two weeks ago, or rather six hundred and sixty-three years ago in the future. It was April 10, 1941, to be exact. . .

Corry and I were taking after-dinner coffee in my Georgia place when Rip made the fantastic suggestion which led us to Angkor. I had been giving him a brief picture of my experiments in Time-Penetration. It really had Rip gasping. His jaw hung like a jack-o-lantern.

"You mean you go bouncing around a couple of centuries back?" he demanded incredulously.

"That's right," I answered, somewhat amused. "I've perfected time-travel. But until now, time-travel has been limited to fiction."

"Ain't that enough!" Rip whistled between his teeth. "I'm not saying I believe you, Gregg. You were a little wacky even when I was your roommate back at Harvard."

I picked up a sketch pad and made a simple drawing for my dubious guest. It was a plain circle, though somewhat

*What happened to the Khymer Empire in Cambodia is actually the greatest unsolved archeological detective story known. This mysterious race, began in the second century after Christ, became one of the greatest civilizations in the Orient. They built vast cities and empires Between 1250 and 1300 a.d. the entire civilization abruptly disappeared. Their cities were left in perfect order.

The Khymers were completely lost to history. No one suspected the possibility of great cities being hidden in the Cambodian jungles. There was no written record to speak of, only legend.

Then, in 1870, Mouhet, a French naturalist, startled the world with the discovery of Angkor Vat. Since then a dozen other cities were located. Inscriptions furnished details about the empire but archeologists don't know where this white race came from, where they went, or why.—Ed.

elliptical in shape.

"That is the Time Curve," I explained.

"No beginning, no end, huh?" observed Rip. "It's like a double header game."

"That's right. But now, listen. Matter, like Time, has no beginning nor end. It's never lost. It's always there on the ellipse. But if something travels around the time curve, certain changes in form occur. We call it 'aging.' Cosmic rays are the cause of this change but now the rays can be warded off much the same as thicknesses of earth protect extinct forms of animal life from changes. Mummies have spanned time."

"Yeah, but they're dead," Rip interrupted.

"*But I do it alive!*" I shot back.

"You?"

"Absolutely. I bisect the curve instead of following it. Cosmic action in the void is almost zero."

Rip's chair stopped rocking. He was getting the idea. Astonishment replaced the doubtful furrows on his brow.

"It sounds good after supper," he grinned. "But seeing is believing. Anyway, I'll stick to the subway where I travel across something that *is*."

"You'd better look at the Time-Torpedo," I smiled. "Come on."

Rip bounced out of his chair, stretching his limbs. For an instant I marveled at those lanky arms of his—real pitching arms.

HE appeared mildly impressed with my experimental shop in the back of the house although it lacked the usual weird appearing apparatus one sees in laboratories. Rip's keen eyes swept past the giant generator and settled on a sub-machine gun.

"Why that?" he asked.

"Just a precaution," I said.

His gaze ran on, finally settling with interest on the huge metal egg at the far end of the room.

"Your Time-Torpedo!" he gasped. His grey eyes reflected the chaotic thoughts the machine brought to his mind. "It looks too heavy to move," he added.

"It's all alloy," I explained, tapping the hull. "Beryllium skeleton, a lead and pallium armor plating against cosmic rays."

Rip's amazement was salted with good old American curiosity.

"How far will it go?" he asked.

"Don't know yet," I replied candidly. "I've put a geotude in it."

"G-g-geotude?" stuttered Rip. "Say, do you offer ten easy lessons when you sell this thing?"

I explained the mathematical principle of geodesy which makes it possible to use the space-warp for travel after the Torpedo had once spanned Time itself.

"I can land in Europe or Asia if I wish to," I said.

"How about going past the Great Flood?"

I shook my head.

"That's the catch," I said. "Money! Money! I need a half-million dollars to build a Torpedo strong enough to break through pre-historic eras. Right now I can only go back some nine hundred years."

Rip's teeth suddenly clicked as if they had cut through a carrot.

"I've got your million bucks!" he cried excitedly.

"Y-y-you. . . Where?" I blurted out.

"Archaeology . . . my Lord, I studied archaeology in college," cried Rip. "Not for nothing . . . million bucks in the library."

He made a dash out of the experi-

mental shop into the library room and I followed at his heels like an inquisitive hunting dog.

"Here, pal," Rip announced triumphantly, pulling an archaeology textbook off the shelf and plunking it before me. *"The hidden treasure of Angkor. That's your half million bucks or more!"*

"A HIDDEN treasure?" I laughed ironically. "What tommy rot!"

"Rot, eh!" Rip growled. "That's what everyone thought of the Angkor legends until they actually found Angkor Vat in the jungles."

I felt embarrassed. I had never suspected easy-going Rip of getting hot under the collar about hidden treasure stories.

"What proof have you got that there's such a treasure?" I asked.

Rip's answer was a dark scowl, as if to say that he believed in my Time-Torpedo so I ought to respect his familiarity with hidden treasures.

"How do I know?" he exploded. "Maybe I've got a hunch. If one legend was right, why not the next? Naturally, the treasure hasn't been found because Angkor hasn't been entirely explored."

"So—?" I said.

"The treasure is there all right," Rip repeated. *"And I know where!"*

"Well, knock me down with a feather!" I half gasped. "Say it again, Rip—but say it slower."

It could have been done literally. I didn't even question Rip's knowledge of treasures. Instead, I vaguely saw myself digging fingers into heaps of emeralds and sapphires.

Rip busily underscored a paragraph in the book and shoved the piece under my nose.

"Listen to this," he said, reading aloud. *"In Angkor, there is a statue of the four-faced Lord, Siva, sitting upon a coiled cobra which is the symbol of the nation. Beneath this statue of solid emerald are the treasures of Angkor."*

I looked up somewhat bewildered and doubtful. "All right," I grumped. "But it's pretty indefinite. And maybe the French archelogists in Cambodia have found it already. Did they?"

Rip was acting pretty mysterious for a baseball player. He smirked in amusement at my question.

"Listen," he said, collaring me with one hand. "You know the Angkor story. The people vanished and no one knows why. Maybe it was an invasion. Anyway, according to the legends, the high priest hid the treasures and died without revealing their whereabouts."

"Like the pot o' gold at the end of the rainbow," I said.

Rip stared at me intently.

"Suppose I tell you exactly where the old priest buried the treasure!"—Rip paused to let this take effect. "Well, it's in a crypt, *five stories beneath the ground in the middle of the central pyramid of the temple.*"

"Where'd you find that?"

"One of the legends."*

I stared at Rip's flushed and excited face and it reminded me of the old days at Harvard, the Corry to Lee battery. Rip used to look at me like that, waiting for my signal, whenever he got into a tight fix on the mound.

"You really believe in this treasure, don't you, Rip?" I asked somewhat shamefaced.

"Hell, I'm positive," he grunted.

I felt my resistance ebbing. If Rip had been selling vacuum cleaners, I would have been signing a check already. Suddenly I threw my arm

*Rip Corry is probably referring to a famous Cambodian legend concerning the Hidden Treasure of the Khymers. The reader can obtain further details in R. Casey's volume on Angkor, "The Four Faces of Siva."—Ed.

around his shoulder.

"All right! I'm a treasure hunter," I said recklessly. "You beat it down to spring training camp, I'll Time-Torpedo to Angkor."

"Spring training be damned!" cried Rip. "I'm a treasure hunter too. When do we leave, tonight?"

LIKE two boys playing hookey from school, we sat down and made plans. Rip was very stubborn about the date we should set on the Time-Torpedo. He was dead set on going back to 1278 a.d., and no other date.

"There's a Chinaman I want to check up on," he smiled secretively. "And also, if we went back there now the French who control Cambodia would claim the treasure."

It sounded awfully idiotic, but 1278 it was. To make things worse, Rip dragged a pile of supplies into the Torpedo. A more fantastic collection of exploring equipment I have never seen. It included a baseball bat, a piccolo, a box of peanut brittle, some unattached sox, two toothbrushes and razors . . . Then . . .

"Why the Tommy-gun?" I blurted out.

"Wolves!" grinned Rip.

"But you're not taking that piccolo," I said firmly. "I've had enough of that half-baked flute in college."

"I gotta have it," pleaded Rip. "When I get sore, I play scales before I swing on someone."

"Romance before the battle," I grunted disgustedly. "But that isn't counting ten."

Rip clambered aboard the Torpedo. There was ample room for three of four men in the rubber cushioned control chamber.

I snapped a service button, shutting the outer door.

"Ready?" I asked drily.

For an instant, Rip looked like a turkey approaching Thanksgiving Day. Then I touched the controls; first the cosmic isolator shield, then the frequency knob.

A sudden reek of burning insulation flooded the shell. That wasn't according to Hoyle. I worked desperately at the dial bank trying to keep the fluorescent greenish light within the Time-Torpedo from dying. Finally the compact generator evened off and the shell quivered with a mighty, muffled drumming. The sound planed down into the fields of sub-vibration.

"Take a look through the photo-cell on the wall there," I called to Rip. "We're hitting the space-curve."

In place of portholes, the Time Torpedo was rigged with sensitized cells on the inner and outer shell. It was a periscopic setup for relaying instant photographs of the exterior world.

Rip stepped over to one of the plates, waiting. Suddenly the Torpedo went through a tremendous series of vibrations and jerks.

Ignoring the funny look Rip gave me, I concentrated on the instrument panel, hastily aligning the controls. I cut the cosmic isolator, switched on the geotude and located our position by tracing the needle on the geo-chart.

"Cambodia," I announced, checking again. "We're back in the gravitational fields—and it's 1278, as close as I can make it out."

Suddenly Rip uttered a delighted gasp. His eyes were glued to the photocells where a strange mixture of yellows and greens flooded the plates. I glanced over just as the color lines began dovetailing. My eyes fairly popped from their sockets.

A city of barbaric splendor lay beneath us. It was completely surrounded by wide, sun-reflecting moats. A few hundred yards to the south, connected

with the city by a long causeway, stood the most fantastic temple in the Orient.

"Angkor Vat!" Rip cried and danced excitedly. "We're rich, Gregg!"

"Wait until we get the treasure," I cold-watered, though I didn't feel as sober as I tried to look. "I'm landing the Torpedo as close to the temple as possible."

My eyes flashed between the control and the photo-cells as I jockeyed the Torpedo above the projecting towers of the temple. For a moment we hovered like some mysterious, weird creature over the Holy of Holies. Then I saw something in the photo-cells that completely sobered me . . .

"Look, Rip!" I cried. "There are people in the temple. The treasure's not ours yet."

CHAPTER III

King Yaya Varman's Sacrifice

"TAKE it easy," Rip shouted. "We're busting right in on a ceremony."

Below us, countless heads were raised in awe and confusion. The sunlight on our Time-Torpedo added to it. I saw a man fling himself from the dizzy precipice of the temple. Twice, spears hurled through the air at us in futile arcs.

"I don't like it," Rip blasted out. "We can't land here. They'll massacre us."

"What do you want, an airport?"

"No, dammit! But get us out!"

"Too late. We've got to land before I can set the Torpedo again."

I hurriedly scanned the temple for a landing place. I picked the least crowded terrace.

The temple itself was a three-stage pyramid. The astonishing central tower was surrounded on each stage by a square of cloistered galleries. Four stairways marched up the dizzy sides of the pyramid at the points of the compass.

There were pools of glistening jade water on each stage, except the third where steep and forbidding steps leaped up to the final heights—an altar. Here the Torpedo jarred upon stone. Excited voices came from beyond the shell.

I cut the controls.

"Better take a gun when you step out," I warned Rip.

Rip slid the service door open before the machine had stopped quivering. I saw him step out gingerly, clutching a baseball bat in one hand.

"Crazy—!" I yelled. At the same time I pulled my revolver from the wall locker.

The moment I stepped to the temple terrace the hot tropic sun hit me a dazzling blow between the eyes. But it wasn't the sun that made me gasp . . .

The terraces flashed brilliantly with treasures of jade, emeralds, rubies and precious metals. The temple towers were encrusted with jasper while golden figures of the God Siva frowned down from a dozen pedestals.

On the lower terraces the tall, golden skinned people of Angkor were kneeling before us as if we were gods. I didn't blame them. The Time-Torpedo would frighten anyone.

"They haven't buried the treasure yet," Rip called. "They're still wearing the stuff. What do we do? Stick around?"

I turned and suddenly saw Rip bouncing up a flight of narrow stairs toward the great sacrificial altar which was overshadowed by a gigantic emerald figure of Siva.

"Don't be a fool, Rip," I shouted.

Almost instantly I saw what was happening. A half dozen priests turned away from the altar, giving me a

glimpse of what was going on. My Lord! What a sacrifice! A lovely golden haired girl was bound hand and foot before the altar stone. Her wrists were fastened with silver chains.

Suddenly a gleaming knife hovered above the girl's breast. The blade flashed down, a path of death in the sunlight.

"STOP that!" I roared. Then something whizzed through the air. The whirling missile clipped the hand of the High Priest, knocked the dagger loose and clattered down the steps with it. It was Rip's baseball bat.

The High Priest let out a yowl of anguish.

"Wish you were the St. Louy pitcher," Rip yelled at the astonished priest.

"Get back here, Rip!" I shouted and started after him.

Rip didn't hear. He took the steps four at a time, charging right into the yellow robed priests. There was a sudden flash of knives.

Up went my revolver. I squeezed once, twice. Two priests pulled away, nursing bloody wrists. The others were stunned by the noise. Then I trained my sights on the silver chains holding the girl's wrists. Another shot and the chains snapped in the air.

A sudden gasp of amazement came from the people kneeling on the lower terrace. The throngs of worshipers who had come to witness a living sacrifice, surged up the temple steps—and strangely, there was no sound of anger. Instead, they pressed forward to get a closer glimpse of us. Even now they stopped short of the final terrace which seemed to be reserved for royalty and the priesthood.

The golden-haired girl stood, terrified and trembling, not knowing what to make of the confusion. She was more than beautiful—particularly the way her frightened eyes were fastened upon Rip as he slipped his arm around her slim waist, leading her down the altar toward the Time-Torpedo.

A murmur of anger came from the priests again.

"They think you're swiping the girl," I cried. "Don't get in the Torpedo."

"You're bats," snapped Rip. "Fetch the Tommy-gun."

The girl seemed to get the idea of what I was saying. She pulled Rip's arm, holding him back. That was hardly necessary, however. One glance from her soft eyes and Rip melted like butter.

"Nunck Pasha!" the girl said in a clear voice.

"Okay," Rip grinned disconcertedly. "I hope you all know what you're doing. I don't."

She repeated the same phrase in that queer, untoned jargon which sounded vaguely familiar. Slowly it dawned upon me. It was almost like the present day Cochin-China dialect.

"My Lord, Rip!" I cried. "I think I can talk her language. I know a bit of the dialect."

Rip ignored me. He was staring at the girl with unabashed admiration until her cheeks flushed and she turned her eyes away.

Suddenly a crashing of cymbals and the silver notes of trumpets blared across the causeway leading from the city to the temple. All eyes turned in that direction.

"Yaya Varman," I heard the girl say.

ACROSS the causeway a dazzling sight met my eyes. Sunlight flashed from a thousand gold and crimson parasols.. Phalanxes of lumbering elephants and warriors in gleaming chariots poured across the causeway.

"My God!" Rip gasped. "If Grover Whalen and the World's Fair could

only see this!"

"We've got to stick together," I answered.

"You argue with the king," said Rip. "I'm getting the Tommy-gun."

Within a few minutes the king's elephant lumbered up a ramp to the second terrace of the temple. Yaya Varman dismounted and approached. He was a big man. His hair and skin was unusually dark and he had a hard, turtle-like face.

"Now explanations," I muttered, seeing the High Priest run to the king's side. The priest talked a blue streak. He pointed repeatedly at the girl, using the name, Mera. Then he indicated Rip and me landing by whirling his good hand to imitate the flight of the Time Torpedo. Finally, he seemed completely bewildered when it came to explaining his smashed wrist and the pistol shots.

"I decided it was time to take over.

"Yaya Varman," I said, stepping forward and raising my hand peacefully.

The king leaped back an instant. I saw him draw an emerald, cobra dagger while the royal lancers edged forward, spears level. The girl, Mera, suddenly stepped in and spoke quickly to the king. I barely understood a word.

"Ask him when he's going to bury the treasure," Rip butted in.

Yaya Varman turned to a group of officials standing behind him and signaled one of them to approach. *A Chinaman!* It was incredible.

"It's Ta-Quan," Rip interrupted happily. "By Jeeps, it's him, I'll bet."

The little Chinese looked surprised, and so did I. He recovered first and with a strange mixture of sign language and Cochin dialect, said:

"Tcheou Ta-Quan, ambassador from Peking to the court of Angkor."

"How'd you know him?" I turned to Rip.

"Simple," Rip grinned. "Some day I'll take you to the public library and show you the picture books. Ta-Quan is an old school-mate of mine—which proves this is the year 1278 a.d."

I stared at Rip and the old Chinaman, wondering if my eyes and ears hadn't framed some weird plot against my common sense.

"Yaya Varman," said the Chinaman, first pointing to the king and then at Rip, "say the tall white prince with thunder stick must take command of the armies of Angkor. You will live in the Palace of the Rope Walkers."

"What's he saying?" demanded Rip.

"Maybe I'm crazy," I answered, hesitantly. "But it sounds like you're going to be a general."

"A general!" Rip gulped. "What the hell of?"

CHAPTER IV

Trouble in Angkor

"ARYA DECA, the land of the North," Ta-Quan repeated in a friendly, though puzzled manner, a few days later.

I grinned and tried again, using every word I could muster of the strange Oriental vocabulary.

"Not Arya Deca," I explained patiently. "We came from America. Can't you get the idea, Ta-Quan? America."

I traced a map on the floor of our luxurious palace quarters, indicating America's position. Then I drew a calendar, showing the rotation of the moon to give the friendly old ambassador the idea of years.

"You see," I said. "America—six hundred and sixty-two years in the future."

Ta-Quan smiled knowingly, pointing at me, then at a statue of Siva.

"All right," I said. "You seem dead set on chalking us up for gods like Siva just because you can't explain our appearance in any other way. But that isn't the point. I'm trying to tell you, just as I've been trying to warn the king, that the Khymer race is doomed. It's not going to be here in another few years."

Both Ta-Quan and the girl gave Rip and me that same confused look which we repeatedly got every time we warned them about the future of Angkor.

Rip Corry smiled at the old Chinaman. He put aside the piccolo which he was trying to teach Mera to play.

"Give it up, Gregg," he said amusedly. "Ta-Quan's got no worry about the future. Next week he goes back to China so the future will know about him."*

I turned to Mera. In the past few days she had become quite friendly.

"Do you believe what we say?" I asked her as best I could.

She stared at me. Then her eyes settled upon Rip. She smiled warmly.

"Sure," I observed drily. "Whatever Rip says in public with his twenty-word vocabulary isn't the same as what he tells you in private."

Mera dropped her eyes while a rosy flush filled her cheeks. Perhaps she did understand what I said.

"Cut it out," grinned Rip. "At least what I tell Mera, and the way I tell it, isn't going to change history. You can't go around stopping these people from vanishing. Do like I do. I'm trading Mera music lessons for lessons in her lingo when I'm not busy reviewing my army."

It was plain that in the short time since we had appeared in Angkor, Rip had easily fallen into the role of being a Prince of Angkor. He had accepted the job of commander-in-chief of the royal armies which he was gradually whipping into shape as well as teaching them pidgin English.

When he wasn't at the military field just beyond the king's palace, he was with Mera.

Of course he didn't know, or quite care how all this had happened. It was Ta-Quan who explained these things to me.

"Mera was being sacrificed to Siva because the wild Thais hordes were sweeping down toward Angkor from the northwest," he explained. "When your friend, Reep, saved the girl, the priests told Yaya Varman it was a sign from the Heavens. The priests said that Reep had come to save Angkor. To defeat the Thais."

"So that's why you're returning to China?" I said.

"Now is time to go to the land of my honorable ancestors," Ta-Quan smiled. "Confucius say that man is not apt to live with enemy at his back."

"Are you worried?"

"No. Only careful," the old man's eyes twinkled. "Siva is a hungry master, particularly when the army is weak and the Thais hordes are almost clamoring at the moats of Angkor. I leave tomorrow."

I stared through the palace window into the street below, seeing the amazing pageanty of an Oriental army move toward the gates of the city, preparing for the Thais. File after file of war elephants, charioteers, armored foot-soldiers and slaves went by.

"Might I suggest," said Ta-Quan, "that you and your friend and Mera the princess come with me."

THE following morning, Ta-Quan departed without us. Rip was very

*Corry refers to the fact that Tcheou Ta-Quan returned to the Court of Peking from Angkor and in 1296 published a book on Angkor. Until the rediscovery of Angkor-Vat seventy years ago his writings were looked upon as imaginative fairy tales.—Ed.

vehement about remaining in Angkor. "We've got the Time-Torpedo if anything breaks loose," he declared. "Why, they've even made an altar for it, up there on the temple."

"You mean you've got Mera," I countered.

"What of it?" demanded Rip. "You've got a job too. You've got to keep your eye on the treasure."

He pulled the inevitable piccolo from his pocket and whistled off a couple of scales. Suddenly he paused and stared at the door with a funny expression on his handsome face.

I glanced in that direction, then choked back a gasp of horror.

A slave girl slowly crawled through the doorway. Her face and body were cruelly slashed with knife wounds and her leg, which dragged behind, was broken.

In an instant Rip and I carried the girl to a couch.

"She's Mera's attendant," cried Rip.

I forced a bit of sweet rice wine between the girl's burning lips and tried to help her. Then she smiled wanly and tried to speak in a hoarse whisper.

"Mera . . ." she gasped. "Thais coming . . . Yaya Varman take Princess Mera for peace offering to Thais."

The girl clutched my arm as if she were falling backward into an abyss. Then her fingers went limp.

"My God!" I cried. "She's dead."

I looked up and saw the fury rising in Rip's hard face. For a moment he had been stunned; now he was galvanized into action.

"They're giving Mera to the Thais as a peace hostage!" he shouted. "Over my dead body, they will!"

I raced after Rip, out of the palace, toward the city gates. My legs had never worked as fast as his and I soon lost ground. I reached the city gates and crashed through the guard there to the causeway across the moat.

Then, out of breath and gasping, I burst upon the royal procession that was being sent to meet the advancing Thais. For a moment I saw the look of hopeless resignation upon Mera's face. Rip was standing in the center of the road, blocking the way.

"What the devil is this!" I heard him shout at the king who was accompanying the procession to the edge of the moat.

Yaya Varman flushed angrily, probably not understanding a word Rip said, but understanding the tone of voice.

Rip pulled his revolver.

"You're going to do this my way," he shouted. "Mera goes back with me."

A crafty scowl darkened the king's face. I edged toward Rip, my revolver already in my hand. Then Rip turned to me.

"You keep out of this, Gregg!" he snapped. "I'm running the bases."

"I'm coaching, then," I cut in.

We were completely surrounded by Yaya Varman's guards. They were only waiting for a signal from their king. We could kill him and account for a half dozen others, but there were more than fifty around us.

Then I heard the king and the priest murmuring. At the same time my ears caught the overtone of noise in the distance. What was it? I had a vague premonition and now I knew that I was right.

"The Thais!" I shouted excitedly. "Look!"

Out across the plains surrounding Angkor a vast tide of elephants and warriors materialized. A wave of spears swept into view. From one end of the horizon to the other the plains seemed to fill with savage Thais warriors. A few stragglers from the Khymer army, that had been sent out days before, fled in the face of the invaders.

CHAPTER V

Battle

RIP swept his arm around Mera, lifting her into a chariot.

"Okay," Rip yelled eagerly. "Strategy—that's what we need. We'll fight. The home army will man the city walls. The guns go to the north gate where the main wedge of the attack will break. Gregg, you take command of the West Gate defenses. Shoot down the elephants and horses. Let them jam the causeways . . ."

Rip interrupted his staccato instructions to quickly kiss Mera.

"Kid," he said. "You lead the women to the temple, keep them there."

"What about him?" I demanded, pointing to the king and his priests.

The king was as white as a sheet at the thought of fighting the Thais. Rip frowned at him a moment, then his face brightened.

"The treasure," he grinned. "Gees, we can't forget that. Yaya Varman will see that the treasures of Angkor are safely guarded in the temple. Then Yaya Varman will command the defenses at the Victory Gate."

Without further formality Rip drove his chariot over the cobbled causeway into the city proper.

Meanwhile the cries of the approaching army became clearer and the very earth trembled beneath the ponderous tread of their war elephants. We had only enough time to clear the city for action before the first wave of ranting warriors surged toward the moats surrounding Angkor.

I saw little of Rip and nothing of Mera during the remainder of the day. Two early attacks were staged against my position at the West Gate. For five hours we blocked the causeway with a solid wall of warriors and elephants.

The clash of armor, death cries of wounded warriors as their bodies piled up in the moats and the mad trumpeting of elephants sounded above the angry bark of my revolver.

The Thais came on, heedless of the loss of life. They sent men into the moats on logs in order to get around our rear and flank us. Finally we had to withdraw within the city gates.

Abruptly the attack shifted. A column of Thais swept around to the Victory Gate while the larger body pushed against the North Gate. We were on the walls now, pitching boiling tar and huge stones upon invaders as they thundered upon the gates.

The Thais threw scaling ladders against the walls and we tossed them back into the moats. At one point, a Thais warrior gained the top of the wall. I aimed at his head. My gun clicked emptily. No ammunition left. A strange feeling of terror swept through me as I threw my pistol madly at the warrior's head and seized a two-edged long sword.

Leaping after the Thais, I plunged the sword into his throat, the blade sinking to the hilt.

Then Rip appeared on the wall. His clothes were torn and his face grimly set.

"We've got to clear out," he snapped. "No ammo left for the Tommy-gun and they've broken into the city. The king deserted the Victory Gate and let the Thais in."

"The Time-Torpedo!" I cried.

"Quick," Rip shot back. "We've got to fight our way to the temple. Hell's broken loose in the streets. I'm getting Mera. You set the Torpedo."

WE cut across the city toward the great temple. Angkor was like a great cauldron of confusion. The city was rapidly emptying . . . but not rap-

idly enough. The south and east gates were jammed with terror stricken fugitives. Crippled ancients, women with babies at their breasts, soldiers and slaves, fought with each other to get out of the city. Already, the road southward was blanketed by a tide of panic stricken humans.

Thais advance guards came crashing down along the avenue before the royal palace. The gutters ran red. The wooden residential district was in flames. In their wake, the Thais left thousands of corpses strewn along the streets. There no longer was any fighting. There was no discipline save in the systematized vandalism and slaughter.

Near the temple causeway we ran into a band of raiding Thais. Snub nosed little asiatics, they were.

"Now we are trapped!" I cried.

"We'll see about that!" yelled Rip.

He charged headlong into the band of five, swinging his heavy two handed sword in a deadly arc. A Thais warrior screamed, seeing his sheared arm spin sickeningly across the pavement. Then I brought my blade into play, jamming it into a Thais chest.

Rip was everywhere. One instant I saw him parrying with two warriors. His sword swished over a helmet and split through to the skull. It whirled back over another warrior's shoulders. Then a headless body crumbled at my feet, bathing the street crimson.

I accounted for the last man with a thrust between the eyes.

"Five to two," grinned Rip after it was over. "Short and sweet."

"Step on it," I snapped back as I ran across the temple causeway.

Reaching the temple, I glanced back upon the city and surrounding plains for an instant. The barbarians had already swept through most of the city.

"It's the end of Angkor and the Khymers," I grunted, not without a trace of sadness.

Then I turned toward the Time-Torpedo. For a moment I stood there, dumbfounded.

"It's wrecked!" I suddenly screamed.

The door of the Torpedo had been wrenched off and even the delicate machinery inside had been smashed.

I stared blankly, for it was as if the world had crumbled beneath my feet. The tangled mess of machinery was a death sentence. We were doomed to remain in Cambodia—but not just Cambodia. *We were doomed to live in the thirteenth century! Or die!*

RIP'S reassuring hand pressed upon my shoulder.

"Come on," he said grimly. "It's spilt milk. No use crying. We can chalk that up to Yaya Varman. Let's be calm about this. The first thing we've got to do is get out of here with Mera and the treasure. After that we'll worry about a new Torpedo."

A few seconds later we were running through the subterranean passages beneath the central tower of the temple. At one end of the passage we came to the chambers where the women had taken refuge.

They were empty!

"Down to the treasure room," I said. "If that's gone, then he's kidnaped her and the treasure."

Reaching the gloomy treasure vault we found the priest who had guarded the treasure, murdered. The vault door was smashed in.

I passed the beam of my flashlight over the stone interior. The heavy copper chest in which the jewels had been packed was open and empty. On the floor below it, lay the hilt of Yaya Varman's cobra knife.

"Rip," I said, "I think I know where they've gone."

Rip's face lighted up suddenly.

"*The Hidden City,*" I said. "Ta Quan let me in on it. Only a select number of Khymers know its exact location. It's off to the southeast, in a jungle area, completely hidden."

"What the hell are we waiting for?" snapped Rip. "I'm going after Mera. Are you with me?"

I nodded positively. "Sure I'm with you. . . But I'm going to send for help first. Give me a few hours. We will be safe here for awhile."

"Help!" cried Rip. "Are you crazy. Who's going to help us? The Thais?"

"The American Science Society."

Rip almost blew up then and there. I had to explain very carefully why I wanted to leave this manuscript in the treasure box along with the Time-Torpedo design I had with me.

Even as I write these last lines before we attempt to leave Angkor for the Hidden City, Rip is still convinced that nothing on earth can save us for we will be dead for many centuries before these words are read. And now we must go, or we will be dead *before* the ink on this manuscript is dry!

(Signed) GREGG LEE.

* * *

ARCHEOLOGIST JACKSON'S trembling fingers dropped the Lee manuscript and he wiped his parched lips.

"So?" said Duval. "What are we going to do? The story is incredible."

"What would you do?"

"Help them," Duval answered. "Help them across six centuries. . . . Help dead men? Is it possible?"

Jackson picked up the design for Lee's Time-Torpedo, studying it. Then he nodded his head vehemently.

"By God! We will!"

ARCHEOLOGIST JACKSON and Duval built the new Time-Torpedo in Saigon. It was the nearest civilization center where the required materials could be gotten. It took six months, six months while the two burned with curiosity and an anxiety that seemed rather ridiculous at times. As Duval often said:

"They have been *dead* for centuries!"

And yet, with that certainty before them, the Time-Torpedo, growing beneath their hands, gave the lie to Fate. With this machine, and the strange science that it employed, they could circumvent the paradox of time past.

So, with all possible haste, they worked to complete the Torpedo.

Finally it was finished. With a last-minute feverish checking up of supplies, they clambered into the machine and took their seats.

A low humming filled the interior of the Time-Torpedo. They had named it the "Two," and it was a machine somewhat larger than the one in which Gregg Lee and Rip Corry had gone to Angkor.

Archeologist Jackson set the Time-Void dial. A needle quivered, registering the swift passage of decades—into the past—1800, 1500, 1300, 1278. . . .

"You're sure the Hidden City, she will be beneath us?" asked Duval nervously.

Jackson nodded.

"I've checked and rechecked until I'm dizzy. If we do not appear directly over it, I shall never navigate another vehicle in my whole life, not even a baby carriage."

"That, she is a statement you cannot predict," grinned Duval.

He turned, then, and fumbled in a packing crate. He removed a Tommy-gun and fondled it lovingly.

"Soon, maybe, *cherie,* we use you, no?" he muttered.

On the photo-cells now a strange mixture of yellows and greens were flood-

ing. Jackson slowed down the Time-Torpedo, and the color lines began dove-tailing. Then, suddenly, so quickly that they were dazed by its appearance, they saw below them, a matter of a hundred feet or so, a stone temple.

"A church!" yelled Duval. "And, by Heaven, she is aflame!"

"Look," shouted Jackson, pointing in horror. "What have we barged into!"

"Ants!" gasped Duval. "Giant ants . . . it is impossible!"

"They're attacking the temple," Jackson said. "Look, down there! . . ."

Below, behind a wall of flame that ringed the temple, three tiny figures were visible. And the flames, obviously from burning tar that had been poured down from the walls, were dying. Through the breaches that were now opening, were pouring hordes of the horrible giant ants.

"That man!" screamed Duval. "I would know him even off the baseball diamond. . . . He is Rip Corry! And that girl! *Magnifique* . . .!"

"Never mind the girl!" roared Jackson. "Open the door and get that Tommy-gun going, or they won't be alive in another sixty seconds. We've arrived just in time!"

DUVAL yanked open the door with a fluent French curse, and leveled his weapon while Jackson drove the Time-Torpedo down toward the ground. The wild chatter of it rose above the crackle of the flames, and above the whine of the Torpedo. Ants crumpled in heaps, and their inward rush upon the helpless humans in the temple was halted as they piled up, one upon the other, in their mad attack.

Down below, the besieged humans looked up, joyous wonder and amazement on their features.

Jackson drove the Time-Torpedo to the ground, and Duval poured a last burst at the now milling, confused ants.

"Rapid!" bellowed Duval. "This is not the time to play at the games!"

The three astounded people, Rip Corry, Gregg Lee, and the Princess Mera stumbled through the door that Duval held open. When they were safely inside, he slammed it shut.

"Up, Monsieur Jackson," he shouted. "The ants . . . they come!"

Jackson shot the Time-Torpedo into the air. When he had reached a height of several hundred feet, he stopped the machine and turned. He held out his hand.

"Gregg Lee, I presume," he smiled.

And Gregg Lee grinned in return.

"Correct, Mr. Stanley," he chortled. "I never was so glad to see a fellow man in all my life."

"It's damn fortunate you left that manuscript and the machine design in the treasure box at Angkor," Jackson said to Lee. "Duval and I got this Torpedo built just in the nick of time."

"We put it together in Saigon," interrupted Duval.

"Those few minutes in which we landed to pick you up make it pretty clear just how the whole Khymer race vanished," continued Jackson, "but how about giving us the rest of the story after you left Angkor? How'd you get into the Hidden City?"

"And tell what happened to the girl," sighed Duval, looking at Mera's loveliness.

Gregg Lee smiled tiredly.

"All right," he said. "I'll give you the story . . ."

CHAPTER VI

The Hidden Stairway

WHEN we finally buried the manuscript and my design for the Tor-

pedo in the Angkor treasure vault, I shared Rip Corry's doubts. Would someone, seven hundred years in the future, discover the ransacked treasure box? It seemed impossible. Would they find the mysterious Hidden City that we ourselves searched for? Or, would our S O S remain silent throughout the ages to come?

Darkness had already fallen upon the invaded city of Angkor. Thais warriors had entered the temple a few minutes after we buried the manuscript and we were trapped again. Twice they came close to discovering us in the subterranean passage.

"We'll wait until the moon goes down," I warned Rip. "Then we'll escape through the same secret passage Yaya Varman used."

Meanwhile we took an inventory of our equipment. Our guns were useless for lack of ammunition. I had thrown my pistol away. However, we each had a Khymer broad-sword. I had my compass and flashlight.

Somehow, even through the fighting, Rip had held on to his piccolo and toothbrush.

After a nervous wait we finally set out. We followed the narrow beam of my flashlight, cutting through two corridors deep within the temple until we entered the low, secret passage that ran beneath the moats surrounding Angkor. The roughly hewn stones of the passage were moist and slippery.

Farther on, we stepped into a larger corridor and found a stairway leading to an exit outside the walls of the city. Starlight was visible at the stairhead.

"No wonder the king got away," I said. "A dozen soldiers could have slipped through here taking Mera and the treasure."

Abruptly, Rip's fingers clamped on my arm, demanding silence. It was so dark I could barely see him.

"Get your bread knife ready," he whispered. I heard the clink of his sword.

Then I made out the silhouette of a squat Thais guard at the stairhead. Apparently he had not heard the noise of Rip's blade, nor the whispering. We moved slowly until we were a bare yard behind him.

Suddenly the man gurgled—but only once. His eyes bulged hideously, his mouth and nostrils dilated, sucking for air as Rip's arm clamped around his throat with the steadiness of a vice. I heard a sickening snap. The guard hung limply in Rip's arms, his neck broken.

"Easy," Rip hissed. "We'll get the elephants out of the corral." He slid the dead man's body down the stairs.

"Ready?" I said, stepping into the night. Angkor flamed against the sky on my right—a great funeral pyre for the million people who had been trapped within those walls.

THE ruddy fire glow revealed a herd of war elephants tethered a short distance away.

"Use your sword," Rip signaled.

The great beasts stomped and tugged at their foot-ropes and trumpeted nervously as we ran between them. For a wild moment we slashed the tethers, releasing the beasts.

Rip vaulted into the basket saddle on one elephant and dragged me up behind him.

"Now, plenty of noise! Heckle 'em!" he shouted. "We'll stampede them all over the place."

We set up a terrific din until the elephants surged around in fright. They trumpeted and bolted off across the dark plain in a solid group making the earth tremble beneath their sluggish onrush. I hung on for dear life. Every jolt of the basket-saddle felt

as if it were going to be the last one.

"D-d-do you know how to s-s-steer this thing?" I stuttered at Rip between breaths.

Rip chuckled aloud.

"Sure, it's like running a Fifth Avenue bus."

He urged the elephant on with a curious variety of nouns and adjectives, but the beast seemed to respond best to a couple of light jabs from a long-sword and to the name, Sadie. Finally Rip turned Sadie away from the rest of the herd and headed her along the Southeast road at a steady gait.

As the sun edged over the rolling Cambodian horizon, Sadie slowed down and became ornery. We were both pretty tired and Rip was silent and grim while trying to manage the elephant. His jaw and sandy hair looked like molded iron in the early light.

I would have given anything to get off our two ton transport and curl up in the shadow of one of those enormous ant-hills that dotted the Cambodian countryside.

All at once Rip came out of his black mood.

"Hey, am I seeing things," he cried.

I swerved my gaze in the direction of his pointing finger. Less than a half mile away the flat rice fields stopped abruptly at a narrow stream. On the other side a dense growth of trees shot upward, forming a dark sheer wall.

"Now we've got our bearings," I observed hopefully. "The Hidden City is northwest. We've got to find the west ravine in the jungles. From there the Hidden City is at a point where a second ravine runs north and south."

"Too bad we can't take Sadie along as our safari," Rip grinned as the elephant lumbered to the edge of the stream and slushed around in the shallows.

"Too much jungle," I grunted.

We located the beginning of the Hidden City trail and abandoned Sadie. The trail curved into the jungle brush and soon petered out in a sea of tall snake grass that ripped and cut at our flesh.

SUNLIGHT barely pierced the heavy mass of liana and fern, but we felt it. The heat beat across the jungle with tropic force until the air felt like a dank, gloomy sponge pressing about us. Twice I stopped, petrified, while cobras slid silently across the path. Luckily the serpents paused only long enough to swell out their hoods before deciding not to give battle.

After what seemed hours of this, I found myself grinning idiotically at the gibbons that hurled themselves through the tree tops. I was so dazed, I wondered why Rip stopped after a little while.

"It's the ravine," he said, excitedly. "The westward ravine!"

"Where's the Hidden City?" I asked.

"Come on, it's still hidden."

Rip ran ahead, leaping over gullies and black stagnant pools, crashing through the brush. The thought of Mera close at hand, spurred him on. Then the ground dipped again—a north and south ravine.

I stared ahead keenly but there was no sign of the Hidden City anywhere. No sign of anything that remotely suggested human activities since the dawn of civilization.

"For the Lord's s——!" Rip's voice stopped on a note of surprise.

It was followed by the sound of rotten wood and falling stones. *Then, abruptly, Rip vanished into the earth.*

I rushed forward fearfully, only to gaze into a gaping hole at the base of a fromanger tree. It was filled with broken branches and caved in earth. *Then I noticed the steps going down.*

"Rip!" I yelled. "Answer me, Rip!"

The snap of a branch sent me spinning around on my toes. My hand dropped automatically to my sword handle.

"Thais!" The word froze on my lips as I faced the savage band of soldiers who so suddenly materialized out of the jungle.

There was no time to wait for Rip. I prepared to do battle alone. Sweeping the terrain in at a glance, I edged up the ravine slope, intending to use every advantage I could. Then the Thais charged forward with a wild howl in their throats.

There was the clash of steel upon steel. I parried with the first two soldiers though the jungle brush hindered the swing of my sword. I used it like a rapier.

The blade opened the chest of one of the men and ripped along his ribs. Blood spurted up my sword to the cross. Suddenly a copper bludgeon loomed before my eyes like a huge sledge hammer. I ducked to the side, but not quickly enough.

My head seemed to explode—swirls of colors streamed before my eyes and my legs sagged as if someone had jerked the bones out of them.

CHAPTER VII

Mister Marco Polo

IT was night when I regained consciousness. First I thought I was blind for all that I could see was a carbon film with tiny pinholes of light shinning through. Then I realized the pinholes were stars.

I was acutely conscious of a tremendous welt, the size of a fist, on my forehead. My hands hurt also. They were tightly bound behind my back. I wondered if Rip had been captured and soon I began calling his name aloud.

A Thais soldier approached, his squat body outlined against a campfire. A crushing blow suddenly struck me in the side and I rolled helplessly upon my face, gasping for air. The guard returned to the campfire.

With daylight it became evident that I was no longer in the jungles and that I was not alone as a prisoner. There were thirty other Khymer prisoners, bound and guarded. Rip was not among them.

A little while later we were joined by a larger group and made to march along the road to Angkor. Slowly I realized what fate had been cut out for me. A brass chain was fastened to my leg and linked to the leg of another man. *I was a slave.*

"They take us to the quarries beyond the great Tone Sap lake," explained the old Khymer who was chained to me.

"Not if I can help it," I replied grimly.

"We will die there in the sun, just as did the Thais slaves my people captured in past years," he said.

My mind was already working out a plan of escape.

"Where are the quarries? How far?" I asked the old man.

"The quarries," the old man answered slowly. "Death would be better."

A Thais guard rode by on horseback to silence our conversation. His whip lashed at us. Suddenly I jerked his foot, dragging him from the horse. Pulling him to me with one hand, I smashed my fist into his jaw. He went out cold.

"Quick," I shouted at the top of my voice. "Overwhelm the others. Escape!"

THE air was filled with confused cries. The Khymers milled around without having sense enough to make a

break for freedom. My own hopes quickly faded when a dozen other guards surrounded me.

"Halto! Halto!" a firm voice quickly established order.

Halto—I couldn't believe my ears. *That command was given in Portuguese!*

The man who had issued the order was a blunt, grinning officer who looked as out of place among the Thais soldiery as a Ming vase looks in a ten-cent store. His shoulders were a yard wide and, save for the seaman's bearing, he looked like a professional wrestler.

For a moment I stared wide-eyed at this olive skinned stranger who wore the trappings of a Thais officer.

He returned my gaze, evenly. Then his sharp eyes shifted to the body of the Thais guard I had knocked out. The stranger seemed impressed since I carried no weapons.

"Amigo—friend! Who are you?" I asked in his native tongue.

His firm lips parted in surprise, then curved in a friendly fashion. His eyes were fastened on the compass hanging from my belt.

"A mariner," he cried excitedly.

I shook my head.

"Mariner!" he repeated hopefully. "I am also a mariner. I, Pacco Gonzales de la Mura y Braga. And you—I have look for you many times Senor Polo."

"Polo?" I replied. Then I burst out laughing. "Marco Polo."

"*Si*, Senor Polo," Pacco added in a rush of Portuguese and Spanish. "Before I leave Lisboa many many months ago I hear that the Senores Polo have make a voyage to the Indies and that they go a second time. *Olay!* You are here. We meet."

Pacco turned to the curious Thais soldiers and issued a series of sharp commands. Before I knew it, my legs were free of their chains and I was riding at the rear of the slave train on Pacco's elephant while he related his own adventures.

He had sailed from Lisboa in a galleon specially fitted out to search for the fabulous land of Cipangu* and the Spice Islands, the renown of which had spread throughout Europe after the return of the first Polo Brothers' expedition.

Months of sailing into the unknown world brought him to Sumatra and the coast of the Thaisland.

"And at the Thaisland," said Pacco. "My ship go down. The people are friendly and I am a soldier also, so I am a lieutenant in the Thais army."

I knew it would be impossible to make him understand that I came from America, an undiscovered country as yet. Or to convince him that I was a citizen of the twentieth century.

It was easier to be Marco Polo the Venetian, although it would be still three years—1281—before the Polo family embarked upon their second journey to the Orient.

However, I told Pacco of my adventures in Angkor, the treasure and the Hidden City.

"We go there," said Pacco immediately. "We find your brother. We find the treasure. We will make our way to Cipangu, thence to Pekin, then through the dark world which stands between us and Lisboa."

As if to punctuate his decision, Pacco guided his elephant around and sent it off at a rapid gait in the direction of the Hidden City jungles.

AGAIN we penetrated the jungle undergrowth and after unbelievable difficulties, came to the north and south ravine. We began searching for the

*Cipangu—Japan.—Ed.

fromanger tree and the hole that Rip had dropped through, when suddenly . . . a red wall shimmered through the dank green jungle.

"Sacra!" gasped Pacco. "A secret city!"

I stared breathlessly at the foreboding towers vaulting above the jungles. Pacco ran headlong through the brush, dragging me by the arm like an excited child. We came to a clearing that ended abruptly at the edge of a scum covered moat which surrounded the Hidden City. It was filled with drifting logs.

On the other side, the jungle citadel rose, silent and grim.

"My God! What a swimming pool," I groaned, seeing the width of the moat.

"It has no depth," Pacco cut in confidentially. He waded into the slimy water.

One of the logs in the moat moved—crocodiles! I lunged after Pacco, clutching his collar and dragging him back.

"Lord sakes!" I shivered. "That's what you call a real Siegfried Line . . . Come, we'll follow the moat until we find a causeway into the city."

Approaching the southwest corner of the city, we came face to face with a great carved gate. Still there was no causeway across the moat. The gate opened into the crocodile infested waters.*

"We must build a raft to get over that," Pacco decided.

"All right, let's do it quickly," I agreed. We began gathering bamboo poles, dumping them at the moat's edge. I marveled at Pacco's big shoulders and arms, the way he ripped vines from the trees like strings of twine.

In the next few minutes I was so busy I almost failed to notice that Pacco had wandered away. Finding myself alone, I became panic stricken.

"Pacco!" I cried anxiously. I ran in the direction in which I had last seen him.

Then I found him—so excited he couldn't talk. He pointed excitedly beyond a pile of fallen lianas to the corner of a small carved arch. There were steps beneath it . . . *steps descending into the dark earth.*

"Perhaps they are where your brother go?" Pacco finally spoke.

"No. These aren't the ones."

Nevertheless, I dragged the lianas away and hurried into the gloomy, slanting tunnel. The steps descended sharply for about forty feet, then flattened out into a stone-lined passage. I switched my flashlight on.

"Porco Dios!" gasped Pacco. His eyes bulged at the sight of the artificial light.

"Come along," I urged him.

The passage was long and cool. Weird shadows leaped and vanished across the walls before the rays of my torch. Soon the stone walls gave way to crystals that rose from the floor and festooned the ceilings with odd shaped spear points.

A short distance farther and we came to an abrupt stop—a solid stone door. Pacco pushed it experimentally, then leaned his powerful shoulder against it. The massive door swung back soundlessly.

Beyond it I saw a broader passage, the walls of which were lined with thousands of crystals that gave off a dim, internal light.

"This is very bad," growled Pacco. "It is not good at all."

I glanced at the Portuguese curiously.

*The Hidden City, actually 40 miles southeast of Angkor, has been reached by only two modern explorers—R. Casey and G. Groslier. Neither of the men were able to enter the city because of the inaccessible moats. And today, the war in Europe cut short the expedition the French Government was sending to the Hidden City.—Ed.

"What's bad?" I asked.

"The door—it has closed!"

I whirled on my heels like a top, not quite understanding Pacco, but sensing something wrong. Suddenly my blood chilled. *The stone gate had closed by itself. We were trapped!*

CHAPTER VIII

Seven Heads of Naga

"DEVILS!" rasped Pacco as he flung his sturdy body futilely against the massive door. "I see it close all by itself. Why? Devils!"

"It's no use, Pacco," I said, "That door was designed to trap us."

"But I break it."

While Pacco expended his violent Latin energy against the door, I looked toward the other end of the glowing passage where it bent slightly to the right. Checked the direction with my compass.

"Pacco! Listen!" I said. "We're under the moat now, or I miss my guess. There must be another exit to this tunnel . . . an exit into the Hidden City itself."

"Or maybe we die here," Pacco answered laconically.

We moved forward cautiously, carrying our swords unsheathed. A hundred yards further on the passage turned sharply left and debouched into a broad chamber where the strange radiations from the crystals diffused a deep purple light.

"For Lord sakes, Gregg!"

I almost dropped in my tracks at the sound of Rip Corry's voice.

Rip raced toward me, throwing his arms about my shoulders as if I were his long lost brother.

"Boy, you deserve a kiss for showing up," he grinned and smacked me on the cheek. Then he stopped and stared at Pacco. "Who the hell is he? Siva himself?"

Although Pacco didn't understand English he was quick to catch on. It looked as if he and Rip were cut out to be pals, especially when Pacco drew himself up proudly, saying:

"Pacco Gonzales de la Mura y Braga, Lieutenant."

"Sailor," I added with a smile. "And by the way, Rip, I'm Marco Polo. You're one of the other Polos, if you don't mind."

"Marco Polo?" Rip gave me a funny look. Finally, when I had retold my adventures with Pacco, Rip grinned.

"That's just spring training. Wait until you hear what I've got on the ball."

His sparkling eyes shot across the dim chamber toward a huddled group of bodies I hadn't noticed before. *Mummies!*

"What's this? A graveyard?" I stuttered.

"That's what I thought when I fell down this hole and the trap door shut me in," Rip snorted. "But they're alive!"

RIP turned toward the group of emaciated, parched-skinned, brown men and women and called an old man to our side.

Rip glanced at Pacco.

"Gregg, you translate for him," he said. "The old man here is Kanbu. He was a slave and he knows the passage into the Hidden City."

"So, what are we waiting for?" I cut in. "Let's get going."

"Wait," snapped Rip impatiently. "Do you think I'd be sitting here if I could have gotten into the city? Lord! I've been going nuts down here, knowing that rat Yaya Varman was loose up there with Mera."

"Well?"

"See these mummy-men," Rip continued. "They're slaves. They were custodians of the Hidden City until they weren't needed. They tell me that the Hidden City is big enough to hold a million people, still it's deserted. Only Yaya Varman and a dozen guards hold the place. It was sort of an ace in the hole for the Khymer royal family just in case there was a popular uprising."

"Makes it all the easier for us," I said.

"So you think," grunted Rip. "We're sewed up here tight as a drum. You haven't met Naga!"

At the mention of the name the old slave, Kanbu shivered.

"Who the deuce is that?" I asked.

Rip laughed without humor. "Naga," he said slowly, *"is the seven headed cobra guarding the only passage into the city.* It's as big as a python. I've seen it."

"Okay, Rip," I said softly. "You've been down here a long time. Maybe there are snakes, but . . ."

"Nuts!" Rip exploded in exasperation. "You think I'm out of my head!"

"Take it easy, Rip."

"All right, take it easy yourself if you can," he snorted.

Suddenly he was dragging me by the arm toward the passage I had seen Kanbu watch so warily. As we approached, a tense hissing sound assailed my ears. Then I saw Naga—an incredibly large serpent with a scaly body as thick as a tree trunk.

From its enormous, fan-shaped head fourteen livid orange eyes glared at me. The mesmeric gaze seemed to drag my eyes from their sockets. I grew dizzy and nauseated until Rip yanked me back into the cavern proper.

"You aren't the only one," said Rip. "That freak monster had me whirling the first day. But we're getting along kind of friendly now. I look at Naga and Naga looks at me—a sort of mutual fascination."

"You stare at the thing," I shuddered involuntarily.

"Sure," Rip grinned. "But it's not helping anyone. While the slaves down here sleep, Naga slithers in and picks out a human morsel. That's why the slaves are kept here."

Corry went on: "Kanbu and the slaves think I'm going to set them free. They've cooked up a yarn that I'm destined to have a conference with the snake and talk him into letting us go."

"Huh!" I smiled grimly. "That's one yarn that won't be backed by fact. You're no diplomat."

"I can hiss," Rip added drily. "But it won't make sense outside of a ball park."

Pacco interrupted. "I think maybe we stay here," he said glumly. "The serpent is too big to battle, and too swift."

"We'd better stand guard," I insisted.

THERE wasn't much else we could do. When the others went to sleep I took a turn at standing guard, tired as I was. Somehow, during those tedious hours, I must have fallen asleep because a while later I was awakened by a godawful, weird music coming from Naga's passage.

How long had I slept, I wondered? Then a wild, unaccountable fear seized me. Naga! Rip! Leaping to my feet, I reached for Pacco and Kanbu, shaking them violently.

"Rip is gone!" I cried. "Gone, do you hear me!"

Old Kanbu shook his head with an air of resignation.

"Naga take him."

Pacco came to his feet like a jack-

in-the-box and raced toward the cobra passage. I grabbed Kanbu and dragged him along despite his protests. We were right behind Pacco when we came face to face with the hideous, seven-headed serpent. I shuddered like an aspen leaf, seeing the great snake sway back and forth, hypnotized by the strange piercing music that had awakened me.

Then my nerves crumbled . . .

Rip was sitting there on his haunches, like an East Indian snake charmer, madly playing the *Ride of the Valkyrie* on his piccolo. He was barely two feet from the swaying giant cobra.

He played wildly as we crept toward him, then signaled frantically for us to pass the snake.

My nerves strummed like steel wires when we crawled along, hugging the wall of the passage until we were behind the scaly monster. I held my breath for Rip as he began edging around.

"God!" I prayed fervently. "Don't break the spell!"

Rip shifted an inch at a time crouching, moving and playing for all he was worth.

CHAPTER IX

"You Be King"

WE ran up the dim passage, still hearing the wild hissing of the serpent in the corridor behind us. Every few yards Rip blasted a couple of bars on the piccolo just to play safe. We reached a triple fork in the passage.

"This way," Kanbu cried breathlessly. "This will bring us into the palace."

"Quidao! Take care!" Pacco signaled.

We mounted a steep flight of stairs and came to a translucent crystal door which Rip pushed aside. We were in the palace! Suddenly Rip motioned us back frantically.

Two guards stood at a second stairway.

Kanbu and I shrank into the shadows for unendurable seconds while Rip and Pacco crawled forward . . . The guards never knew what hit them . . .

Pacco's longsword halved one guard even as he turned with bewildered surprise upon his face. A hot spurt of blood choked any cry that might have surged in the man's throat.

Meanwhile Rip's iron fingers jerked the second warrior clean off his feet. Tense thumbs stiffled a scream of terror. The man's tongue hung out idiotically.

Pacco and I seized the spears, adding them to our collection of armament. Then we followed Rip upward, into the very center of the palace. He ran ahead with unerring certainty, as if some mental bond were leading him directly to Mera.

Up to the last corridor we met no opposition until Rip suddenly halted. Before him an apartment door quietly opened . . .

My fingers tightened over the hilt of my sword as I squeezed against the wall. At the other side of the doorway Pacco levelled his spear, waiting. We watched Rip for a signal to attack.

The signal never came. Instead, Rip dropped his sword and leaped forward with a happy grin spreading from one ear to the other. Then I saw Princess Mera in the doorway.

She stood there, timid and beautiful as ever. The cry of fright upon her lips melted into a thankful sob. She threw herself into Rip's arms and the two of them were oblivious of all the world.

"Mera, child," I finally cut in.

"Where is the king? How many men has he got in the palace?"

Mera looked up, choking back her tears.

"At the temple—" She answered haltingly.

"And the treasures of Angkor?"

"Don't bother her," Rip interrupted. "Give her a chance to buck up."

"It's at the temple also," Mera said. "The jewel caskets are there on the third altar of Siva."

"Hmm. Everything in one place," I smiled. "Come on, Pacco. Rip."

THE HIDDEN CITY, with its imposing shrines and glittering buildings, was like a ghost city as we crossed it. The hot Cambodian sun beat down upon deserted streets where the sole inhabitants—lizards and centipedes—scurried beneath stones at our approach.

"Here is the temple," Mera pointed, anxiously. "Yaya Varman is here with a few soldiers."

We had come this far without trouble. Now the temple hovered before us, shimmering in the heat like an unreal thing.

Abruptly, Pacco grabbed my arm.

"*Mira!* Look!" he hissed, pointing with his sword.

Yaya Varman and a band of Khymer guards marched from the shadowy alcoves of the temple. The king hesitated an instant, seeing us. His turtle-like face turned pale.

"The rat!" yelled Rip.

Then, with a cry of battle upon their lips, the King's men rushed us with drawn swords. We braced ourselves for the first onslaught. It was four against one when the air rang with the clash of metal upon metal.

"Up the terrace," snapped Rip.

Step by step we retreated, fighting bitterly, trading slash for slash, lunge for lunge. Pacco was an army in himself. His broadsword nicked one guard on the shoulder. Again the blade whirled, sweeping a horizontal arc, clanging against Khymer armor, halving a man, trunk from legs like a cut log.

"*Magnifico!*" he shouted lustily. He withdrew his broken sword, tossing the handle into another Khymer's face along with a string of violent Latin epitaphs. Then he seized a lance.

"Bravo!" Rip tossed at him. "Done like the very last of the Mohicans."

Pacco grinned back.

"To hell with that," I shouted. "This is the last stop—there are no more terraces."

Kanbu fell across the steps before me, pinned through the back with a lance.

Meanwhile King Yaya danced about behind his soldiers, jabbering at us in the kind of Khymer rhetoric that never appeared in the Sanskrit carvings on the Angkorean temples.

The steps of the last terrace ran slippery with blood. We had trouble keeping afoot. I saw Rip fall back a few paces. He parried angrily with one warrior, then slashed desperately at another who leaped to the steps above him.

Mera screamed shrilly—Rip had fallen!

Yaya Varman shouted triumphantly. His face burned with venemous hate as he leaped toward Rip.

"You die, White One!" he cried, shooting his spear at Rip's unguarded throat.

I felt a sharp blow on my shoulder as a body lunged past me, falling in the path of the king's spear.

"Pacco!" I yelled.

It was too late. I saw the brave Portuguese roll on the steps, clutching at the spear that pierced his chest. He

had saved Rip at the cost of his own life.

WITH a vengeful growl in his throat, Rip raised himself and rushed at the king. Yaya Varman found himself squirming in midair. The Khymer soldiers dropped back in amazement at the sight of their king held aloft like a shivering bag of meal.

Rip staggered toward the terrace edge, the muscles bulging in his arms.

"Chalk this one up for Pacco," he shouted grimly and hurled the king from the heights of the temple to the next terrace forty feet below. There was an unearthly shriek quickly followed by a sickly thud, then a bloody groan.

Abruptly, the Khymer guards lost interest in the battle. One by one they lowered their arms while one of their number bowed before Rip.

"Our king is dead," the Khymer said, unemotionally. "The law demands a king who will replace him. We must have a strong king to fight against the Thais invaders, to rally our defeated people. You must be our king."

Rip's face was flushed. He grinned at the soldier, then threw me an odd, helpless look.

"What'll I do, Gregg? I ain't cut out to be a king. I'm a baseball player."

"You be king," I said. "See what Mera thinks."

We both looked toward the girl and found her staring wide-eyed—not at us—but toward the jungles. Suddenly she turned to Rip with a cry of terror upon her lips.

CHAPTER X

The Ring of Fire

STRANGE sounds, mingled cries of agony and despair swelled out of the jungle just beyond the great moat.

I stared down from the temple heights, seeing a disheveled Thais soldier stumble across the clearing to the moat's edge. He hesitated, glanced despairingly toward the Hidden City, then hurled himself into the moat.

I felt sick to my stomach, for a moment later a great wave of men and women, Thais and Khymers alike, ran into the glaring sunlight and leaped blindly into the crocodile filled waters.

"They're mad!" Rip gasped, not knowing what to make of it.

The water below us churned with the hideous whirling of crocodiles tearing human flesh. Splotches of crimson spread through the water as wave after wave of hysterical people swept past the Hidden City.

Presently there was a lull and fewer people running. A wave of anxiety gripped me when I saw that our own Khymer soldiers had deserted. In a moment I forgot them when Rip pointed at the jungle again.

A woman was staggering toward the moat. Her body was covered with great, ugly white ants which she frantically fought off until I saw her stumble and fall. Then a greater tide of ants crawled from the jungle and swarmed over her. A moment later the ants moved on. I found myself staring at a skeleton.

The jungle was carpeted with the things—a tidal wave. Fromanger and palm trees became masses of vibrating, pulsating life. The ants swarmed out of the northwest, coming endlessly.

"Gregg, they're over the moat! They're in the city!"

Rip swept Mera into his arms and started running down the terrace.

"Hold it," I called. "We can't get out now. Use your head. We've got to kill them."

Rip stopped long enough to toss me

a look of sarcasm.

"Nuts!" he cried. "Kill them? What do you think I am? An insecticide?"

"Fire!" I shouted. "There are some pitch pots below. Build a wall of fire around the temple."

There was no time to waste. We worked like madmen until we had ourselves hemmed in on the third terrace by a solid ring of fire. The ants were already feeling their way along the rim of flame.

"If that won't hold them, nothing will," Rip muttered in a breathless, worried voice. "The damn things must be eating up the whole land."

A LINE of ants streamed over the final stage of the terrace. They were horrible looking things. Each half of their segmented bodies was the size of a football and shone like glossy armor. Their legs made a chilling metallic sound as they crossed the stones of the terrace.

Rip ran forward with a torch and an urn filled with pitch. Suddenly he threw the urn aside angrily and backed away.

"No pitch left," he cried. "It's no use—another few minutes."

The strain was too great for Mera. It was no wonder she was weeping in Rip's arms.

"It's all right," Rip spoke softly. "It's all right, kid."

The girl stared at the two of us, then at the great ants as they fought the fire and moved relentlessly across the terrace toward us. She watched them with horrified fascination and didn't see Rip draw his knife.

"Mera—" Rip began.

He pressed his lips to the girl's while his hand lifted the knife to her breast. I couldn't watch. I turned my head away.

Presently an unexplainable shadow crossed the stones of the terrace. *A shadow!* It returned swiftly, this time larger. Then I shook my head dizzily and began stuttering hysterically at Rip.

"I-i-i-it's—" I couldn't form the word. Instead, I pointed crazily at the big metal Time-Torpedo settling on the terrace just on the other side of the altar.

The stutter of a machine gun blasted the air. The ants fell back.

That was too much for me. My knees sagged and I sank wearily upon one of the caskets containing the Angkor treasures. It seemed utterly fantastic when from the door of the Torpedo a sweating, pudgy face poked out.

"Rapid! This is not the time to play at the games," called the voice.

* * *

"THAT," SAID Gregg Lee as he leaned back against the cushions in Time-Torpedo "Two," "was when you and Duval came along just in the nick of time. A few minutes later, and the ants would have finished us off as they did the Khymer race. You saw the size of them."

"That was no joke," nodded Jackson from where he stood at the controls. "It took us six months to copy your Time Machine design. Another day and—pooft. Where would you be?"

"Six months," cried Gregg Lee. "You mean to say six months have passed since you found my manuscript?"

"He is right," Duval cut in cheerily.

"Incredible," answered Gregg Lee. *"We buried the manuscript less than a fortnight ago!"*

"That's right," Rip Corry added.

Archeologist Jackson rubbed his gaunt chin with a thin hand. His brow furrowed quizzically.

"I just thought," he began cautiously.

"No! That's impossible too . . . I was thinking that perhaps you and Rip Corry died. Perhaps centuries did pass. Then Duval and I came back and butted into a finished picture. That would be like blotting out a scene in a painting and putting in a new scene without ruining the composition. Perhaps that will explain the six months? Perhaps Time was squeezed somewhere?"

Gregg Lee shrugged tiredly.

"Well, I'd rather talk about the treasure," he sighed. "What's going to happen to it when we go down and get it aboard the Torpedo—after the ants are gone? I suppose with Duval here, the French Government will put in a claim?"

Duval smiled.

"The treasure," he said. "She not rightfully belong to France."

"What do you mean?" Gregg Lee asked.

"But of course," Duval went on wisely, nodding at Mera, "the treasure belongs to the Khymers . . . the pretty *mademoiselle* is a Khymer. Yes? The last one. Yes?"

"I don't think she's very interested, though," smiled Lee. "I think she has something more pleasant on her mind."

Both Rip Corry and Mera glanced at Lee and the Frenchman. A Cheshire grin spread over Rip's face. He leaned down and gave Mera a long kiss.

"Yes," he acknowledged. "I think she has!"

YOU OUGHT TO BE DEAD!

No, readers, not you! That's just the title to a peach of a new space yarn by

ROBERT MOORE WILLIAMS

Coming to you in the August issue of Amazing Stories.

6 GREAT STORIES, *Including:*

WANDERER OF LITTLE LAND, By Eando Binder—A new story of the "little people," these strange little men whom we know only as fairies and brownies.

THE MAN WHO BOUGHT MARS, By Polton Cross—A fantastic situation that arose when a man found himself owner, by right of purchase, of a whole planet.

AMAZONS OF A WEIRD CREATION, By Jep Powell—Women ruled this future world, and men were slaves. But there was one girl who was not like her sisters . . .

SIDNEY THE SCREW-LOOSE ROBOT, By William P. McGivern—The most hilarious and the best robot story ever to appear in fantasy fiction. An author's "best."

VISION in a CRYSTAL!

THERE she was, lithe, lovely—entrancingly beautiful—dancing in the forest in this incredible world in a jewel! And to Lee Blaine, when he found her on this strange second Moon of Earth, she became all that meant anything to him. But infinity lay between their worlds, an infinity that he must cross. Then one day he found the way, and entered a weird world of adventure and danger, and fought for the love of Aurita, the Druid Girl. Don't miss this brand new masterpiece by Ray Cummings in the

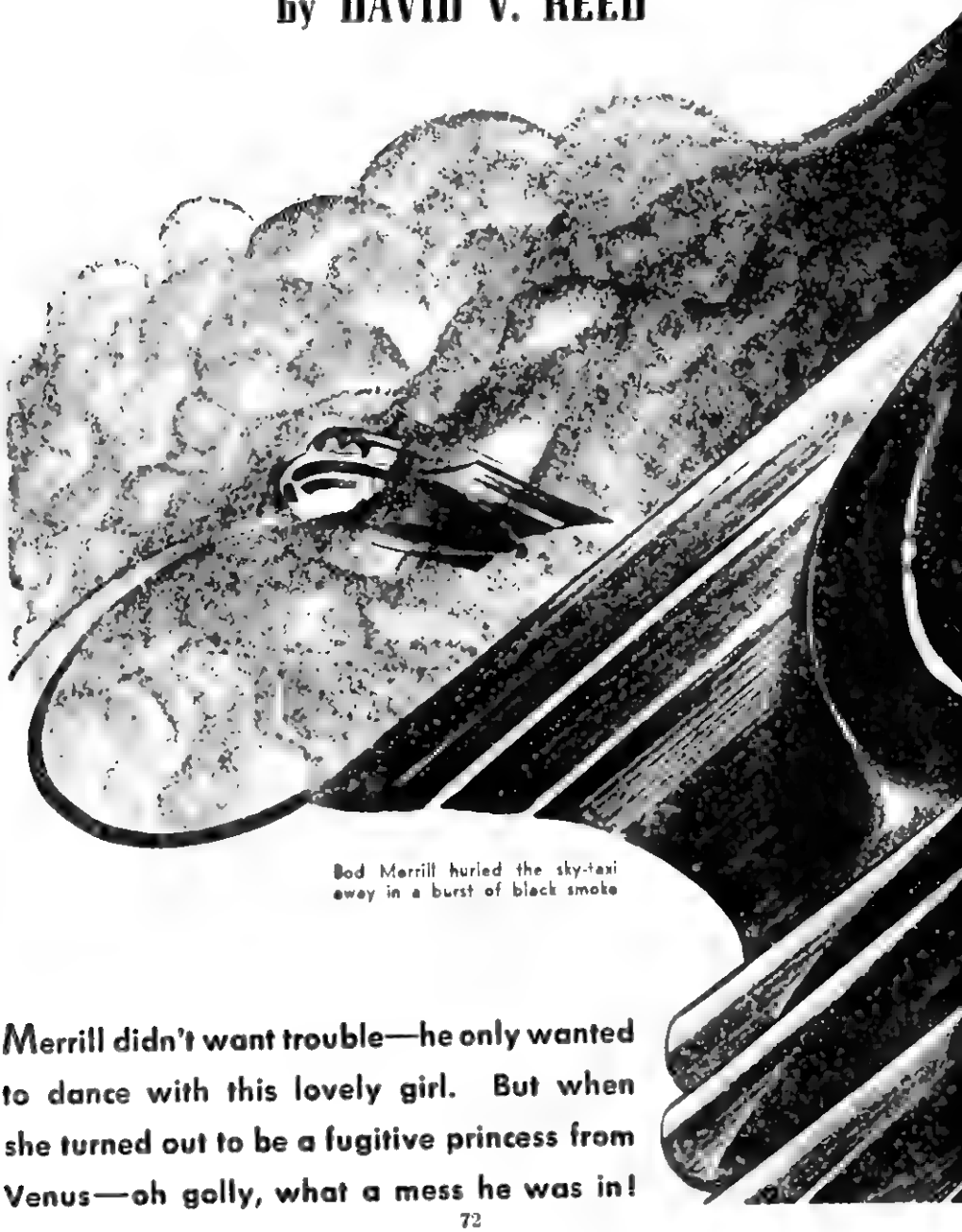
BIG JUNE ISSUE

fantastic ADVENTURES

ON SALE AT ALL NEWSSTANDS APRIL 20!

THE GIRL FROM VENUS

by DAVID V. REED



Bod Merrill hurled the sky-taxi away in a burst of black smoke

Merrill didn't want trouble—he only wanted to dance with this lovely girl. But when she turned out to be a fugitive princess from Venus—oh golly, what a mess he was in!

"COME and get it, you tinhorns! I can lick any ten . . ."

The shouted invitation from inside Kerrigan's American Bar was accompanied by the sounds of a wild struggle. So wild, in fact, that four Martian policemen stayed quietly outside and peered in through the windows, content to wait until the storm had passed. Meanwhile they winced as chairs shattered and glass broke, and the howls and yells and shrieks and groans kept pace with the breakage. It was a very impressive brawl.

Bod Merrill, the challenger, was in there somewhere, buried under a mass of indistinguishable citizens who hailed from every quarter of the universe, who had no use for each other but had united to exterminate Merrill. Now Merrill's head showed as he punched his way to the surface.

"Don't you worry, Lilla! I'll get rid of these ugh"—someone kicked him

and went down with a broken nose—"pesky fools and then you and me"—a momentary pause as he ducked a chair leg and swung a vicious left—"can go waltz at the Tonda Towers."

Merrill had fought his way erect again, and the floor of Kerrigan's American Bar was strewn with various Venusians, Mercurians, one bearded Jovian, and a trio of green-faced Saturnians. Now Merrill was charging forward into the last half dozen survivors of the argument, his fists pumping at short range like pistons.

Several minutes later he stood alone on the floor and grinned as he turned to a blue-eyed girl who sat on the bar, swinging her legs and smoothing her costume of red and yellow Martian silk.

"I did it all for you, Lilla," Bod Merrill breathed. "You're too good to be working in a joint like this. I got my taxi outside. Let's go take in those waltzes I was talking about when these mugs interrupted."

The girl surveyed Merrill silently until he was closer. When he was close enough, she picked a bottle off the bar and hit Merrill a solid pop right on the top of his head. Down went Bod Merrill.

"Listen, you ape," Lilla snapped, "it just so happens that I like it here, see?" Just then the four Martian policemen edged timidly through the door. "Here," the girl pointed to the dazed Merrill, "lock this loony Lothario in the clink for the night. He's got romance on the brain." At the far corner of the room, the band had slunk back to its place and now it suddenly let go a blast of red hot jazz. "The drinks are on the house!" Lilla shouted through cupped hands. "Step up, gents, and name your poison!"

* * * *

"GEE, TED, I can't thank you enough for getting me out of here," Bod Merrill murmured. "I'd lose my job if I was locked up all night while I'm supposed to be out with the taxi."

"Don't talk to me," Ted answered wearily. "I don't want to have anything to do with you. I got you out of here because it's a habit with me, but I'm mighty sick of the habit by now."

The little m o o n - f a c e d Martian looked up from the ledger. "The fine's two hundred *tollen,*"* he smiled. Ted grunted and counted the money from a roll in his hand. "Thank you," said the turnkey. "Nice to have seen you again."

When they were outside the jailhouse, Merrill said, humbly, "I didn't know she was Kerrigan's wife, Ted. She's new around here. I guess I'm just too romantic, like she said." Ted kept walking without saying a word. "It's like I was meant to be a bachelor by fate," Bod Merrill sighed, "and I never met a feller with less natural instincts for that kind of life than me." He started abruptly as his friend turned and walked away. "Hey, Ted, the taxi's here!" he called. "Hop in and I'll fly you home."

"No thanks, I'll walk," Ted answered dryly.

"But it's past midnight and—" Merrill started to say, but Ted was around the corner. Bod Merrill sighed again and looked into the magic of a Martian night sky. The stars were like huge jewels, the night was warm, and a soft breeze played with his hair. "Past midnight, and what a night," he said aloud. "What a night for romance . . ."

A few minutes later, seated in his single-winged taxiflier, Bod Merrill hovered over the night-bound city of Tonda, capital of Mars. He stayed only a thousand feet up, ready to swoop down for a call the instant a purple taxi-light showed. Gradually he became lost in his thoughts, and when he

* About $50.00 in American money.—Ed.

looked down again, he was over the Tonda Towers. He listened intently and his face assumed a wistful expression.

"Ah," he groaned, "a waltz. And me up here, pushing a taxi around."

The more he thought about it, the less equitable he decided the fates were, and while he was deciding, the small taxi-flier descended as if by its own volition and landed on the parking area of the Tonda Towers. Well back in the area, to be sure, for taxis were forbidden at the exclusive Towers." Just the same, from where he was, Merrill could hear the melodious strains of the waltz very well. He closed his eyes and settled back in his seat, and smiled sadly.

Suddenly he sat up. There had been a noise, and a muffled cry like a woman's voice. Bod Merrill sat quietly until he heard it again, farther away this time. He clambered out of the taxi and climbed up on the copter wings and looked around.

"Holy H smoke and fire!" he exclaimed. "What kind of a game is that?"

There was a woman in the parking area, running and ducking among the parked fliers, her long gown trailing after her. From several different vantage points, three men were closing in on her, calling to each other as the girl fled from hiding place to hiding place. Once one of the men almost had her, and Merrill could hear her gasp, but it wasn't until another did catch her that Merrill moved. That was because she cried out with fear in her voice, and the man clamped a hand down on her mouth. It didn't look like a game anymore.

EVEN as Merrill jumped down from the wing, the girl tore loose again. Merrill ran to where he had last seen her and bumped into one of the men. In the dim glare of the parking lights he could see the man's evening clothes and the savage gleam in his eyes.

"What the hell—" the man growled as Merrill bumped into him, and that was all he said. His head snapped back from Merrill's fist and he went down in a silent heap. Close by the girl's voice sounded again, and Merrill bounded toward the sound. He came up behind her and caught her in his arms as she backed into him. She cried out again and Merrill spun her around so she could see him.

"Don't be frightened, Miss," Merrill said hurriedly, and stopped. He wasn't sure whether he was looking at a girl or a dream. Maybe he was still in the taxi and this was all the result of the waltz music. Because, even in the gloom, this girl was so unbelievably beautiful that Bod Merrill froze on the spot. "I'm going . . ." he gulped, "to . . . help you."

"Please!" the girl cried. He could feel her shivering. He grabbed her arm and began leading her back to where he had parked his taxi. Halfway there the two men sprang out from behind a flier.

Merrill pushed the girl violently away and let go with both hands. He swung his body to the left, then the right, his arms almost crossing in mid-air, so swift and certain was his movement. One of the men collapsed against a parked copter. The other clutched his midsection and sank slowly to the ground. Merrill and the girl were running again. When they got to the taxi, Merrill lifted her in without bothering to open the door. Just as he was about to jump in beside her, Merrill saw one of the three men coming along again.

"Excuse me," Bod said, stepping down. "I've some unfinished business, I see."

"Don't!" The girl clutched his arm, her lovely face distorted with fear.

"They'll kill you!"

Merrill shot a glance over his shoulder. A small Crane gun* had appeared in the man's hand, and it was too late to hesitate. He wrenched himself free of the girl and arched his body back, kicking out on a long leg. The pistol exploded with a blinding flash of brilliant green light as it sailed from the man's hand. Then Merrill quickly jumped into the taxi and the twin propellers hummed; the accelerator came into action and the ship lurched into the sky.

From the parking area, two slender green streams stabbed at the taxi, and Merrill hit the wheel and rocked the ship in crazy loops as it kept rising. When he was out of range, he started for the center of town and took a long breath.

"Kill me, lady?" he said, bewildered. "Those eggs were out for slaughter. We'd better get a flock of cops as soon as we can."

"No!" the girl whispered fiercely. "Please, you don't understand. Not the police. If you want to help me, then do, but don't let the police know anything about this. I beg you."

Bod Merrill looked at the girl. She was obviously a Venusian. Her skin was as pale as a lily, and her hair was raven black. She held his arm as she spoke to him, her full red lips quivering, her dark eyes clouded.

"Lady," Merrill said, dully, "you don't have to beg me. You just tell me. I'm a free man with an ache in him to be a slave, and I guess I'm yours from now on."

The girl's fingers tightened around his arm and she lowered her eyes.

"Thank you," she said. "After tonight I had almost lost all faith in people. You can't understand what you've—"

Suddenly, Merrill had dived the taxi-flier as a ship veered in front of it, and twin streams of green heat groped for the little ship. Instantly, the larger ship turned on its nose and followed the dive.

"Hold tight!" Merrill said grimly. "There's somebody with murder on his mind right behind us."

THE little taxi dived in a straight line, down, down until the lights on the buildings seemed but a few feet away. Then it straightened out with a snap, in the nearest thing to a right angle that Bod Merrill had ever made in flight. Five hundred feet over the ground, it scudded along with its throttle open. When Merrill caught his breath, and the ringing in his ears stopped, he saw that the girl had fainted from the pressure of the pull-out. And the next instant, the other ship was shooting at him again.

Bod Merrill swallowed hard. Courageous though he was, this was more of a suicide pact. Whoever was following them had no scruple against killing in the middle of a city, and that brand of homicide left an intended victim with no way out . . . except the police. Merrill touched the alarm switch that would envelope his ship in red, as a signal to the police that a flier was in distress. But he looked at the unconscious girl and remembered how she had said, "I beg you," and instead his hand went back to the wheel.

Far to the left there was a cloudbank which was spotted once as the spaceport

---

* The Crane gun is an atomic pistol which fires a small pellet of magnesium, activated by U-239. The pellet, upon exposure to the air, releases its energy as a burst of intense heat, burning with an instant and fierce combustion. These pellets have been known to melt through two inches of chrome steel in one second of energy-release. They are a savage, though effective, weapon, and are outlawed by the Interplanetary Peace Committee as uncivilized. However, the law is not strictly enforced, since they are the favorite weapon of interplanetary big game hunters.—Ed.

beacon caught it in its sweep. Zigzagging from side to side, the taxi veered toward the cloud. Once he spun the ship right across a badly aimed shot, and there was a snap as the right wing took a hot stripe right across the middle. He had lost the cloud in the dark, and he had to duck all over the sky until the beacon came around again and touched an edge of it. It was moving in the wind, and now it was down a bit, but close by.

With a twist that hurled him against the side of the ship, Merrill darted into the cloud. His fingers moved like oiled machinery, punching the instrument board. He wanted to stop dead in the middle of that cloud, but there was no way to dissipate the forward motion that the ship had gathered—no way but one. The little ship began to spin bow over stern in a tight loop, its motors dead, climbing up and turning its belly skyward until it rolled over and dived down again, and then up again, over and over . . .

When the ship took its last climb slowly, he stopped it and switched on the copter motors, and the taxi was standing still in the middle of the cloud. Not quite though, for Merrill gauged the drift of the cottony bank in the wind and let the ship move slowly forward with it. Then he pressed his hands to his pain-wracked temples and held them there a moment. He knew what the effect of his maneuver had been: a ship diving into a cloud at top speed and not coming out. There was a stunt he had learned once, before the I. P. patrol had suspended him for a year, forcing him to wait out the time as a taxi driver, and all because . . .

But the girl was stirring. Her long lashes fluttered and her frightened eyes opened.

"Where are we?" she whispered.

Bod Merrill grinned.

"About two steps and a roll ahead of the undertaker," he said. "This cloud is a friend of a friend of mine."

"You got away?"

"So far." Merrill's face tightened. "Look," he said, quietly, "I don't want to appear as if I'm welching on a promise, but unless I can get the police to help us, something bad is going to develop. I don't like the idea of dying just when I've found something to live for."

The girl was silent.

"All right," she said, her voice very low. "I realize it isn't fair. My life is over anyway. You might as well call the police and settle it."

"Wait a minute," Merrill said, puzzled. "I don't like the sound of those words. Why don't you trust me? Why don't you tell me what this is all about?"

She lifted her head and looked directly into his eyes.

"I am Princess Nana of the reigning Venusian house. The men following me intended to kidnap me and hold me for ransom." Her lips trembled as she added, "Now I am at your mercy."

"I don't understand," Merrill said slowly. "Why are you afraid to call the police, in that case?"

"Because my father would hear of it," she said, holding back each word. "He thought I was at school, but I had come here to marry someone secretly."

The gloom on Bod Merrill's face deepened as he asked, "And?"

"Look out!" the girl screamed, pointing a finger ahead.

THROUGH the vicious eddy of clouds, the nose of a ship had come poking through. Even as the girl screamed, there were two lances of green hitting the taxiflier, boring through its metal.

With its driving motors off, the taxi was a stationery target, but with a flip,

Merrill shut off the copter motors and the ship plummeted downward and out of the cloud. The minute he was clear, he snapped on the driving motors and the ship surged forward. Ahead now was a long streamer of light—the beacon, turning in a circle. Merrill got right behind it, just out of its light, and began turning with it.

"We're safe here for awhile," he muttered. "That light beam acts as a shield because of the contrasting dark all around it. Yes," he muttered bitterly, "we're safe here until I can get you to your sweetheart!"

"But you don't understand!" the girl cried softly. "The man I was going to marry is in that ship that's following us! I thought . . ." she was crying now, and the tears rolled down her cheeks, "... he . . . loved me."

"Holy H fire and brimstone!" Merrill shouted. "That's wonderful. That's absolutely wonderful!" And in his excitement and exultation, he let the taxi nose into the beam of light until is metal wings gleamed like a moth in a flame.

"Here we go again!" Merrill cried. The other ship was right behind him. For several minutes he dived slowly and looped the ship, and the other was always behind, getting closer all the time. Merrill's eyes narrowed.

"Nana," he said, "I want you to know that I love you. I'm telling you this because I'm going to try something desperate. Those birds behind us are nosing up for a sure kill this time. So I want you to know that while I ain't much of a guy, and I'm a busted I. P. gendarme waiting for a suspension to lift—if you'll have me, you being a real Princess and all. . . ."

"Have you?" the girl said, her eyes misting. "In the few minutes we've known each other, hovering between life and death, I've realized how much I love you, though I don't even know your name."

"It's Bod," said Merrill, whipping the ship directly around in a tight circle. "Short for Ichabod. My folks come from New England. Do you still love me?"

"Yes," Nana gasped, as the ship darted straight ahead.

Merrill was heading directly for the ship that had been following him—speeding at it with the force of a bullet. His eyes were tiny slits as he held the wheel, and he could feel the girl's fingers tearing into his arm. Straight toward each other the two ships came. Only a few hundred feet separated the hurtling machines—and then the larger ship dropped away!

Instantly, Merrill was on its tail, and as the other ship turned to come at him again, he headed nose-first for its bow again. The larger ship ducked a second time, and this time the Crane guns licked out for the taxiflier. But in the middle of its shooting, one of the guns went dead, and now there was only one of the deadly heat weapons left. Merrill laughed shortly and spun again to meet the other ship in the tightest possible arc, to cut down the time in which he provided a target. For a third time, as the two ships headed for each other, the larger gave up, quickly this time. It turned over and began to lose altitude.

"YOU know what I'm thinking?" Bod Merrill grinned. "That I'm going to be a helluva bridgegroom, because I'm going to have to pay for this ride, and that'll break me clean!"

The girl smiled up at him.

"Bod," she said, "are we free of them?" There were still tears in her eyes. Merrill nodded. "Then you must take me to where I can find a ship that will bring me to Osander."

"Osander? But that's halfway across

Mars!"

"Yes. There's a rocket leaving for Venus in a few hours. I must be on it."

"But why?" Merrill groaned. "I can't let you go like this."

"You must, dearest." When she looked into Merrill's eyes, it almost blinded him. "You know you must. When I get home, I'll tell father. I'll prepare him for the shock slowly." She pressed her lips on his. "And then I'll come back to you."

Bob Merrill shook his head.

"Don't kiss me like that again," he murmured, "or I'll never let you out of my sight." He looked at the ship's gauges. "I can't take you there in this bus," he said, "and there's only one that I can possibly lay my hands on that could do the trick in time."

"Then take me to it."

"It belongs to my friend Ted, but the way he feels about me, I'd have to steal it."

"Oh."

Merrill took her hand.

"Of course I'll steal it," he said. "I'd steal my grandmother for you." He grimaced. "You know," he said, "there ought to be some way for you to be able to make that rocket, and for me to get one wish before you go."

"What wish, Bod?"

"I just want to waltz around the floor at the Tonda Towers once with you. Just close my eyes and have one waltz."

Nana looked tenderly at him.

"Darling, how romantic you are."

"Don't say that," Merrill said, hurriedly. "That's always been the root of all the evil things that happen to me." He sighed. "Something I ought to tell you. I was suspended from the I. P. because I was too romantic about a girl. She turned out to be engaged to the Colonel's son, and we had quite an—uh—argument about it, with the result . . ." Bod Merrill's keen eyes had caught sight of something far below him. "Look!" he said. "That ship—they've been following us for the past few minutes!"

Things happened fast after that. The instant Merrill saw the ship, he zoomed up, and immediately, the other ship became enveloped in brilliant red—the distress call of a plane!

"What's he want to do that for?" Merrill exclaimed. "He'll have the cops down on both of us!"

Right in front of the taxiflier a nest or amber rocket-lights exploded. It was the warning signal of the Martian police! Unless the ship stopped at once and coptered in mid-air, it would be followed by thick rays of green heat from police flier-guns!

"They must be nuts!" Merrill shouted. "Why don't they get after those maniacs in that hearse down there?"

"Bod, dearest!" Nana said nothing more. She seemed unable to speak. Fear had laid its hand on her throat, and the sight brought anger welling up from within Bod Merrill.

"So those Martians zanys think they're going to burn me down?" he gritted. "Maybe they have another think coming."

MERRILL gazed out through the cockpit glass as another burst of warning rockets shot in front of him. There were four police planes flying along with him, two above and two below. And the ship which had pursued Merrill was with them; it was still glowing red, calling more and more police planes to the scene.

"It's crazy!" Merrill swore. "No man would risk his neck like that! What are they up to?"

All at once the sky was filled with the shriek of sirens. The police were warn-

ing all traffic out of the vicinity. They were going to shoot him down!

Just as he prepared himself for the first maneuver, checking his oil gauge, Merrill saw that Nana was crying.

"Stop," she whispered. "Don't risk your neck. I'm not worth it. I've lied to you."

Involuntarily, Merrill let the plane slowly ease off its speed.

"What?" he said, hoarsely. "You mean this whole thing—"

"No!" the girl cried. "No, Bod, you mustn't believe that. I do love you. I love you more than I can ever tell you." She was weeping so bitterly that she couldn't speak.

The taxi had come to a halt now, and the police planes and the large red-enveloped ship were on all sides, boxing it in. A voice in a heavy Martian accent called out.

"Follow us and do not try to escape. You are placed under ar-rest!"

Merrill stuck his head out of the cockpit and waved to them.

"Okay," he said, "I'll play." Then, in despair, he swung the ship about and fell into the cortege that hemmed him in. He looked straight ahead.

"Bod," the girl cried softly. "You don't understand. I couldn't tell you, on my honor. I made up that story about marrying secretly."

"Yes," Merrill said heavily, "I was beginning to see that too. No kidnaper ever called the police to help him. It was a good story for awhile."

"I can't see you so bitter," Nana said. There was resolution in her eyes as she spoke. "The men who were pursuing me are part of an outlaw army on Venus—you've heard of them—the Red Hand Society. If they succeed, my father will lose his life, and my uncle, his throne." Her voice gathered courage as she went on. "I couldn't stand by and leave my family helpless just because I was a girl. Someone was needed to take an urgent message to Osander, and I came incognito this afternoon to Tonda by rocket. I hoped to throw off anyone who might be shadowing me by spending the night at the Towers. But I had to get to Osander within two days and leave immediately for home, with the answer."

Bod Merrill looked on while she cried again. When she gazed into his eyes, he felt his will leaving him at the sight of her beauty.

"Bod," she cried, "don't you see? The wealthy Interplanetary corporations want to remove my family from the throne because they've refused to let them loot Venus of its ores, its God-given heritage of woodlands and medicine flowers. And someone had to come here to beg for help!"

"That still doesn't explain the police," Merrill said.

"No," Nana said, slowly, "not unless you know that Mars itself is on the brink of civil war."

"What?" Merrill exclaimed, thunderstruck.

"The Martian Council of Senators has forbidden any more Martian support of the Red Hands, but the corporations are defying it. If the Senate tries to use force, there will be war on Mars!"

"You mean you've got a message for the Senate?"

"For Senator Ryll alone. But now, even the police in Tonda are helping the corporations and the Red Hands. The message will never get through. In a month, the rebels will strike in Venus, if the corporations send their next shipment of arms through!"

"But why didn't you tell me this before?" Bod Merrill cried. Nana had fallen silently away into a corner of her seat, the tears coursing down her lovely cheeks. "You could have trusted me,"

he said. "Didn't you know that?"

Nana nodded her head.

"I was honor-bound to tell no one, and I couldn't let you go on risking your life for a lie."

MERRILL groaned.

"And now look what you've done," he said in despair. He looked out of the cockpit windows. They were almost at the police field. Suddenly Merrill's face brightened.

"Nana!" he said, tensely. "Maybe it's all working out for the best! I think we may have a better chance now than before." He looked at the girl, and the spark of hope that flamed in her eyes buoyed him up beyond words. "Listen, I've got a plan," he said hurriedly. "If I can manage to gain about three minutes on these cops, my friend Ted's place isn't far from here. I'll drop you there, put you in his ship—"

Merrill stopped in sudden alarm.

"Nana, can you pilot a flier?" he asked. The girl nodded soberly. "Good!" He paused, thinking, then said, "I've got two ideas about what comes next. One of these is a fine one, and it means that we could probably be able to waltz together tonight, in perfect safety . . ." Bob Merrill shook his head savagely. "Don't pay any attention to me. I'm just being a romantic fool again." He went on, "No, we'll use the other plan. You'll take the plane and wait until I've led the police off on another chase, and then you can streak it for Osander. After that, the fates can have it."

He looked out of the window again. Below there was the huge, amber-lit port where the police had taken him. The taxi and its convoy stopped motors down and began descending. Merrill held up a warning hand to the girl and plunged the oil indicator-disk all the way down.

Just as the exhaust fumes and smoke billowed out, Merrill hit the taxiflier controls. The little ship shivered erratically in mid-air, and it bumped sharply against the police ships on either side, then hit the ones above and below. The police ships, their equilibrium destroyed as they were moving straight down, rolled over and fell away out of control, and before they could right themselves, the taxi had disappeared in a whirlwind of smoke, shooting right up through the center of its own blinding trail!

The instant the ship was lost from sight, it plummeted down again and sped along as near to the ground as it could. Behind it the sky had become filled with flares and crossing streams of green fire as the police raked the sky. Bod Merrill let his breath out and felt Nana's heart beating as she pressed close to him.

"Maybe we'll get that three minutes," Merrill said, "but no more than that. They'll put sound detectors on me; probably took my motor vibrations while we were going with them."

Nana bent over and kissed Merrill. His eyes were still glazed when he dropped the ship silently on the dark lawn behind Ted O'Brien's estate. Swifty, Merrill helped the girl out of the taxi and took her into the hanger. A long, sleek ship in silver and crimson stood there, power and speed lying on its surface like a pedigree.

Bod Merrill took a last look at Nana as she entered the ship. He opened the bow motor covers and stuck his head in. After a moment or two, he closed the motor again and went to Nana. She had lit up the dashboard and was checking on the instruments, and now she said, hurriedly:

"There's no time darling."

"Till we meet again," Merrill said. He opened the doors and the ship's mo-

tors hummed. Suddenly the ship began moving out. "No!" Merrill shouted. "Nana! Wait until I've gone up!" But the motors were coughing from inactivity, and she didn't hear him. The ship rolled out and stopped, then the copter motors whirred and the plane lifted with a sudden surge of power.

From the great house of the estate a thin figure was running.

"Hey! Is that your voice I hear, you crazy Bod Merrill?" It was Ted O'Brien, awakened in the middle of the night. "Hey—Merrill! Who the hell is that in my ship?" O'Brien shouted, running faster.

"Sorry, Ted!" Merrill yelled, running for his taxi. He jumped in and lifted the ship a few feet off the ground. "Be back in a jiffy!" he called down. "Don't worry about anything. Love is a wonderful thing!"

And immediately the taxiflier shot upward. When it had reached two thousand feet, Merrill touched the alarm switch off and on, and the taxi was bathed alternately in a crimson glow. Merrill grinned as he visualized the reactions of the police when they realized who it was signalling them . . . and then Merrill almost choked!

Because the motors on his ship were stopping! The instrument board showed the warning clearly; there was a two-minute emergency reserve of fuel left, enough to land with and no more.

QUICKLY, Bod Merrill sized up the situation. The most important thing had been to let Nana get far enough away before . . . He decided that it wouldn't matter, *if* he could hold them for five minutes more. But he couldn't hold them in mid-air anymore, and maybe that was again a good thing. On the ground he might be able to use a few new tricks. He had picked one up in Kerrigan's American Bar.

The police arrived a moment after the taxifier landed, and in droves they began settling down after him. Merrill bounded out of the useless flier and almost into the arms of Ted O'Brien, who was still standing in robe and pajamas and cursing in a loud voice.

"Pardon me!" Merrill exclaimed, jumping out of Ted's reach and dashing for the hangar. The hangar would be just right, he had decided; large enough to duck in for awhile, and small enough to discourage the police from shooting too enthusiastically with their heat pistols.

Once in the hangar, he climbed up to the first short balcony and piled up a pyramid of empty oil cans. Then he got the heavy flushing hose ready for action. Finally he opened two crates of aerial flares and lined them up. He had just about finished when the first of the police came tearing into the hangar. Bod Merrill grinned and his eyes narrowed as he watched them.

Downstairs, on the floor of the hangar, they were turning everything upside down when Ted came running in.

"Stop it, you idiots!" he cried. "I tell you the girl made off in my ship! If it's her you're—"

"You talk too much, Ted," Merrill muttered to himself, and with a short kick, he sent half of the piled up oil cans tumbling down in a deafening, hair-raising clatter. It had its effect: the discussion ended immediately as the police, shouting incoherently, made for the ladder to the balcony!

But climbing that ladder in the dark had its disadvantages, especially when policemen were treading on each others' hands all the way up. Still, it looked like they were going to make it, but Merrill then pushed the rest of the oil cans over, and the outraged howls drowned his laughter completely.

Below, officers were shouting wild

orders, and other ladders were being pushed into place when Bod Merrill calmly turned on the hose and let it shoot full force down the length of the ladder. The police flew off like tenpins, and the confusion became cataclysmic. Half a dozen portable sunners lit up below, their beams of light raking the balcony. Over and over, officers kept bellowing for no one to shoot; they evidently wanted the Princess Nana alive, now that they thought they had her.

Two of the beams converged on Merrill just as he pulled the pins from two of the flares and threw them down. Another flare, and another, and the hangar became a dazzling inferno of colored light. The blue and yellow combined to form a blinding, vibrating eyeache, and the red made the hell more realistic. Flare after flare came hurtling down, and as the police stood there, trying to cover their eyes, their sunners paled into insignificance, Bod Merrill, standing in the balcony with his dark goggles on, kept the powerful hose spurting. He looked like a grim, bug-eyed assistant demon among the sinners as he stood with his legs apart and blew the men down off their feet with the thirty-foot stream. But it had to end, and it did.

Someone got to the main water-control and the hose died. In utter silence, the police withdrew until the last of the flares had burned out. When they came back, a scope of sunners flashed on and held Bod Merrill in their beams, and a voice called:

"This time we shoot you unless you come down!"

The party was definitely over. Merrill knew that from the way the Martian officer had spoken. Holding his hands over his eyes, he nodded his head and started down the ladder. But the beams remained focused on the balcony, in the evident expectation that Nana would appear.

WHEN Bod Merrill got to the floor of the hangar, three policemen climbed up. *"Cojjina ete!"* they yelled down. "She's not here!"

"Piog!" a Martian officer shouted angrily. *"Lras han—* Look! You fools—"

"Nevertheless," Merrill interrupted, "what they say is true. I am alone." Nana, he knew, was safe by now. They would never suspect . . .

Outside more sirens were sounding, and the landing lights of two more police cars flashed. When the new arrivals entered the lighted hangar, there were two Earthmen among them.

"Merrill!" one of the Earthmen shouted. *"You?"*

"Hello, Anderson," said Merrill, slowly. "Yes, it's me. A little surprised to find me here?"

"Listen, you!" Anderson spat out. "Up to now you've been nothing but a headache on wings, but this time you stepped into something! So you couldn't take it, and turned crooked, huh?"

"Shut your face," said Merrill. "What did they pay you to sell out? When bigger crooks are made, the X-Terra police'll make 'em."

A Martian officer stepped forward, but Anderson said,

"I'll handle this. I'm a specialist on the career of Lieutenant Ichabod Merrill."

"Nobody," said Merrill, stepping forward and landing a short hook to Anderson's stomach, "but intimate friends of mine call me Ichabod!" Anderson doubled up and went to his knees.

"Take him away!" Anderson shouted. "Put the dame in my ship!"

"But I try to tell you," said the Martian officer, "the dame, she is not here!"

Anderson's red face turned a shade blue as he struggled to his feet.

"What?" he cried, "you mean you let that crooked dame slip through your fingers?"

Merrill jumped away from the police who were holding him and put his fist into Anderson's face with a sharp smack.

"Not even *intimate* friends can call my girl that," he observed as Anderson went down again.

The police jumped on Merrill in bunches then, and when he came up from the floor, Anderson was still shaking his head. Now Ted O'Brien came forward, pushing aside the police.

"Wait a minute, you crazy fools!" O'Brien cried. "Don't you see he doesn't know what it's all about?"

"You stay out of this," said Merrill.

"Bod," O'Brien groaned, "don't you know that the girl who took off in my ship is being hunted by the police?"

"Sure." Merrill's jaw was square.

"You mean you knew who she was?" Ted O'Brien said, incredulously.

"I said so, didn't I?" Merrill said. "She's the Princess Nana, of the royal Venusian house.

"Who?" O'Brien shrieked. *"Who did you say she was?"*

Bod Merrill looked from O'Brien to Anderson, and to the other Earthman; Martian expressions were too hard to understand, but there was no mistaking what lay on the faces of these three.

"Is everybody going deaf?" Merrill said, slowly. "I said she was the Princess Nana."

"O-o-o-o-h-h-h," O'Brien groaned weakly, holding on to the gasping Anderson. "She told him she was *a Princess!*"

"Let me out of here," said Anderson, shaking his head. "That weakness for romance finally caught up with him. Ten years in the radium mines might cure him." He looked at Merrill. "Look, Merrill, I'm willing to take those two shots you delivered me as being addressed to the wrong party, if you'll tell us where that finger went." He jumped back hurriedly as Bod started for him. "Look, Merrill," he said desperately, "can't you understand she ain't what you think she is?" He fumbled frantically in his pockets and brought out a folded sheet of paper. "Here, take a look at this!"

MERRILL snatched the paper and opened it. Then his face went white. The sheet was one of the regular bulletins of the Interplanetary Patrol. At the top it said: Wanted By—Earth and Venusian Governments for complicity in jewel-robberies and smuggling; Senate of Mars for smuggling; Mercurian Council for complicity in hold-ups and jewel robberies. Directly underneath was a large photograph of a beautiful woman who looked Venusian. Under that: Black hair, very white skin, dark eyes, full Cupid lips. Accomplished pickpocket and finger woman for smugglers and jewel thieves. Married four times to: Pockface Phil, Kyll the Ripper, Lightfinger Ed McCann, Bottlenose Benny . . .

It went on like that for a bit, but Bod Merrill let the paper slip from his fingers. He was talking out loud.

"I was eloping," he said, "but the man I loved was going to kidnap me so my father wouldn't hear of it so I'm going back to school." A low moan escaped from Merrill's lips. "No," he went on fiercely, "there's civil war coming to Mars, and I've a message for the Senate."

Bod Merrill looked around and began to laugh very loud.

"Well," said Anderson dryly, "his mind's snapped at last. I knew he couldn't keep falling in love every week

indefinitely. Now we'll never get a sane word out of him, and the Lord only knows where Gertie the Finger is. Better check and see if the dragnet is working."

"You see," said Merrill, laughing again, "I'm just a girl, but I couldn't let my uncle lose his throne." He looked at Anderson and added, "Now could I, Anderson?" and began roaring again.

"See?" said Anderson to O'Brien. "Now he thinks he's somebody's niece. And you, waking up all hours of the night to bail him out of the jug. If he had his mind, he'd get ten years in the radium mines." He shook his head sadly. "Take him away, boys."

But when the police tried to move Merrill, he only waved his hands at them and laughed louder than ever. Finally, coughing and wheezing, he drew his breath and stopped. His face was almost somber now.

"If you boys will follow me," he said, dryly, "I'll put the finger on Gertie the Finger."

"Merrill," said Anderson, his voice unsteady. "You mean that?" He swallowed hard. "You ain't crazy, are you, Merrill?" Again he swallowed. "Because there's some twenty-five thousand dollars in various planetary monies out for that mama."

"Who's thinking about money?" said Merrill. The first flush of insane hilarity had passed. "I'm a man with a broken heart," he said. Then he turned and dragged the three police with him to one of their police planes. When the whole cortege was in place, he gave the signal.

Fifteen miles away, following a north by northeast course, Bod Merrill asked the planes to fly just over the ground, and some four or five minutes later, they saw Ted O'Brien's plane in the middle of a field. Half a minute later, all the police planes had landed.

WHEN they dragged the girl out of plane, she was covered with grease and oil. She was screaming and kicking, and the words that flew from her beautiful lips were not very ladylike. Then he saw Merrill.

"You!" she screamed. "You ——— ——— ——— double-crosser! If I ever get my hands on your ——— ——— ——— body, I'll ——— the ——— ——— out of your ——— ——— until you're a ——— ———!"

"Please," said Merrill, quietly, "you're killing all the love that's in me, Princess Finger."

The Princess expressed her views on love before she was safely ensconced in one of the planes. Finally, Bod Merrill and Ted O'Brien were alone, and Merrill entered O'Brien's ship and poked about in the motor.

"Bod," said O'Brien, "it may have escaped the attention of those police, because they were so happy to lay their hands on her—but I'm dying away with curiosity. How did you know where she was?"

Merrill sighed.

"How did I know?" He shook his head and sighed again. "You boys figured out only part of it. You see, I had two ways to help her escape. One was to be the decoy while she tried getting to Osandar. The other was being a decoy until she could get out of sight within a few miles. I chose the second one, at the last minute, so I fixed the motor to blank out soon after she started out. So, naturally I knew she'd be somewhere around here." He paused and put the hoods back in place. "Motor's okay now," he said. "Let's go."

"Pardon me if I sound stupid," said O'Brien, "but why did you decide to let the ship blank out instead of getting away?"

Merrill wiped his hands. He looked very sad.

"Because I was going to come after her when I got away from the police. And then I was going to take her waltzing with me some place. She had another day, she said."

O'Brien slapped his forehead and moaned again.

"Well," he said, resigned, "you were a romancer right up to the end. I hope the happy ending this time doesn't becloud the crystal-clear lesson involved."

"I'm cured," Merrill said. "Once and for all." He was very quiet as he sat down beside O'Brien. The dawn was coming up over the gray Martian landscape. Merrill fumbled in his coat pocket, then suddenly sat upright.

"Ted!" he said, "I'm going to have to pay for the fuel I used in that joy-ride tonight. All that fuel!"

"You should worry," Ted answered. "How about the reward?"

Bod Merrill looked hard and long at O'Brien.

"Do you think?" he demanded, "that I would take money for turning in the woman I loved?" He sighed and stopped fumbling in his coat. "Even if she did steal my watch," he murmured. "At least its got my picture in it. Maybe she'll look at it once in awhile and think of me."

Fortunately, the motors were sputtering again as the ship took off, so Merrill didn't hear what Ted O'Brien said to that.

« « ERSATZ » »

WHILE everyone is aware of the remarkable strides made by Germany in the synthetic creation and duplication of basic materials, there is, somehow, a tendency to forget that right here in America experiments have been conducted which indicate that in the field of synthetic production we have equalled and surpassed the best efforts of any other nation in the world. Perhaps this is because our synthetic experiments have not received the publicity of those of other nations.

For instance, Henry Ford, one of the country's most ardent exponents of conservation through synthetic production, has been directing his experimentation toward the commercial use of tree bark, corn cobs and cellulose fibers for years. But it was only recently that the newspapers and the public awoke to the amazing results which the Ford laboratories were achieving.

Ford has announced that experimental automobile bodies, constructed from cellulose fibre plastics, have already been built. Furthermore he has predicted that in a few more years most of the materials going into the construction of motor cars will come, not from mills and factories, but from the farms of the country. These cellulose cars will be easier to propel and will be several hundred pounds lighter than those of conventional steel design.

The field of plastics is practically unlimited. Houses and offices, in the future, will use material of this nature almost exclusively it is predicted. The Ford laboratories have succeeded in making tile from corn cobs and tree bark and they have produced smooth, handsome looking silk socks from ordinary sawdust.

Also they have created synthetic fuel from potatoes, corn, rice and other farm products. Thus America will soon be driving cellulose cars powered by vegetable "juice" and liking it fine. It's a back-to-nature movement on wheels that will conserve priceless basic materials which are of prime importance to the national defense.—*William P. McGivern.*

CAGLIOSTRO—MAGNIFICENT CHARLATAN

COUNT CAGLIOSTRO was one of the most bizarre and fantastic characters the world has ever produced. He was born in Palermo in 1743, of poor but respectable parents, who little dreamed that their new born son would live to amaze and disrupt the capitals of Europe

Cagliostro's childhood and youth were uneventfully spent in a monastery in Cartagoire, where he picked up a scanty, sketchy knowledge of chemistry. Equipped with this and his native shrewdness, he severed his home ties, dropped his real name of Guiseppe Balsamo and, as Count Cagliostro, philosopher and alchemist, sallied forth to dip his nimble fingers into the pockets of a credulous world.

Greece, Egypt and Asia knew him first. Through these countries he traveled selling his "elixir of immortal youth." Kings and Sultans and titled nobles vied with one another for the favor of his advice and company. In Venice he succeeded in captivating and marrying the almost incredibly beautiful Lorenza Feliciana, who became his skillful accomplice in his later schemes and manipulations.

Then, posing as a necromancer and Free-mason, Cagliostro journeyed through Russia and England with his beautiful wife, duping hundreds of aristocrats and nobles with his wily glibness.

To give the devil his due, Cagliostro must have possessed a magnetic, compelling personality. For wherever he went men and women followed him as if he were a new version of the Pied Piper The most intelligent and best informed minds of Europe and Asia listened to him, believed him, went to him for treatments and advice and paid him fabulous sums for this dubious privilege.

It was not, however, until he reached Paris that the record of his chicanery begins to assume staggering proportions. Here, in the tawdry glittering magnificence of the palace of Versailles, Cagliostro was revered almost as a god. Courtesans and kings believed him to be immortal; in fact they believed that he had lived since the dawn of time. Picture, if you can, the spectacle of nobles and princes crowding about this arch-charlatan while he describes for them, in vivid detail, the fall of Rome, the Crucifixion, the death of Caesar and other dramatic historic events!

For incredible sums he distributed his "elixir of immortality" throughout the capital of France. For additional consideration he foretold the future for his admirers and, you may be sure, he promised them all happy hunting in the days to be.

About this time Cagliostro, the wonder-worker, as he was called, became involved in the mysterious affair of the diamond necklace, the scandal that rocked Paris to its foundations for months. The facts in this baffling case were never very clearly brought out, but it is known that Marie Antoinette and Countess Lamotter-Valois were involved along with Cagliostro and other noblemen. It is known, however, that the priceless diamond necklace disappeared completely and was never seen since. It is more than probable that the wily Cagliostro, who had been acting as agent for *both* parties in the case, was one diamond necklace richer at the conclusion of the affair. This has never been proved however. Cagliostro was sentenced to the bastille for his part in the affair but with his customary cleverness, he succeeded in inventing a plausible tale which effected his release.

For five more years this amazing character succeeded in dazzling the courts of Europe with his presence and manner, but finally a Spanish court found him guilty and sentenced him to death. This sentence was later commuted to life imprisonment and he died in 1795. His wife ended her days in a convent.

While we cannot condone or minimize the offenses of this almost legendary rogue, we are forced to admit that the ingenuity and brilliance of Cagliostro, the magnificent charlatan, have never been surpassed in any age or country.—*William P. McGivern*

WHY NOT BE AN EXPERT ACCOUNTANT? YOU CAN!

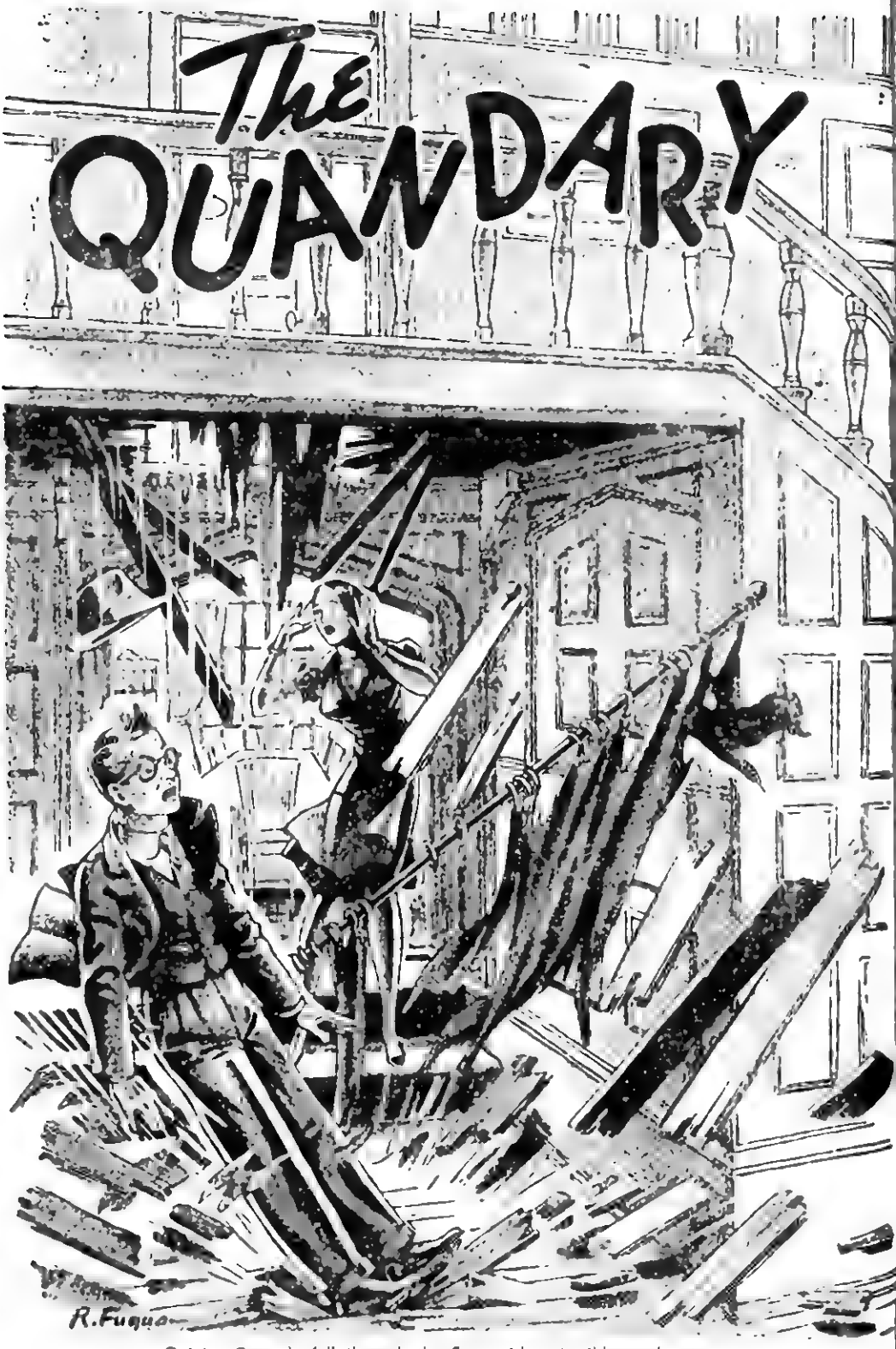
MORE and more opportunities—that is Accountancy's appeal to ambitious people like YOU! Government, industry, thousands of firms, are needing trained accountants. C. P. A.'s and executive accountants earn $2,000 to $10,000 yearly; new conditions are steadily increasing the demand! LaSalle trains you at home in your spare time; among our alumni are over 10 per cent of the C. P. A.'s in United States. Training prepares you for C. P. A. examinations or executive accounting positions. Staff of C. P. A.'s personally supervises every phase of your training. You do not need previous experience, for we start you from the beginning. Numerous new opportunities now waiting in Governmental and industrial lines warrant your considering this subject carefully! So act now—investigate LaSalle Accountancy training's possibilities without delay.

Write today for free 48-page booklet, "Accountancy, the Profession That Pays"!

LASALLE EXTENSION UNIVERSITY • A CORRESPONDENCE INSTITUTION

DEPT. 875-H CHICAGO, ILL.

The QUANDARY



Quintus Quaggle fell through the floor with a terrible crash

# of Quintus Quaggle

by WILLIAM P. McGIVERN

Quintus Quaggle's whole future depended on instant and decisive action. But just at that important moment—he turned to stone!

THE San Francisco office of the Puff and Huff Advertising company was in the midst of something that could only be described as a turmoil.

Account executives unbent to whisper to clerks. Clerks unbent to the extent of answering them. In addition to these precedent shattering occurences the switchboard operator had stopped chewing her gum, and after that anything could happen.

For the rumor was flying about the firm that Mr. Phineas P. Puff, of the New York office, was arriving in town that very day and his first port of call would naturally be the branch office.

His visits always created a furor because, Mr. Puff being pretty much a standard executive, was fond of shouting incoherently at his employees to cover up the painful fact that he had nothing intelligent to say to them. But on this particular trip, rumor had it, Mr. Puff was going to shake up the staff, fire half the office, promote the other half and deliver a rousing pep talk to the new employees. This latter group, the dark rumor also hinted, would be great in number.

In an obscure corner of the outer offices a small, timid looking individual sat hunched behind a neat desk taking no part in the subdued hysteria that was rampant in the agency. This in itself was not unusual, for Quintus Quaggle, filing clerk un-extraordinary, made it a habit to pay attention to his work and no attention to office gossip and speculation.

But Quaggle's tranquillity this morning was due to another reason. Quintus Quaggle wanted desperately, almost frantically to be a copy writer and he hoped to convince Mr. Puff of his ability and ingenuity. Therefore Mr. Puff's visit filled him with hope and confidence, for Quintus had prepared several layouts and sample advertisements to display to the all-powerful Puff.

Quintus knew they were good. They *had* to be good. His whole future depended on their being good. Thinking of this, Quintus dotted a last "i" carefully, stood up and walked the length of the office, not stopping until he reached a desk where a slim, dark-haired girl in a red dress was working.

He swallowed once, then twice, as he always did in Phylis Whitney's presence. In Quintus' opinion, it was the eighth wonder of the known world that this adorable girl would even speak to him. He didn't question the miracle when she did. He merely accepted it as a Tibetian Llama might accept the

inner mysteries of some hallowed monastery.

"Phylis," he faltered, "I—I've been working on some layouts in my spare time and I'm going to show them to Mr. Puff when he gets here. I—I wanted you to know."

"I'm glad you told me about it," Phylis said warmly. "It gives me a chance to wish you the best luck in the world. I just have a feeling they're darned good and I'll bet Mr. Puff thinks the same thing."

"I don't know," Quintus said miserably. "Sometimes they look all right and then sometimes I think they look terrible."

"Quintus, you musn't talk like that," Phylis said in a tone of voice that might have told Quintus something had he sense enough to hear it. "You've got to develop more confidence, more enthusiasm in your work."

"What work?" a voice, masculine and superior, asked behind them.

PHYLIS and Quintus turned.

Leaning noncholantly against an adjoining desk was a sleek young man with a satisfied, superior smile touching his lips.

Quintus felt a strange resentment stirring in his breast. This was Gordon Strong, one of the firm's copy writers. His sarcastic tongue was usually flicking at Quintus' sensitive hide and his cynical eyes were generally slanting hopefully in the direction of Phylis' pretty, dark head.

"I repeat," he said with a ripple of amusement in his voice, "what work?"

"Quintus has written some copy," Phylis said defensively. "Darned good copy, too. He's showing it to Mr. Puff when he gets here."

"Ahh," Strong said mockingly. "Competition, eh Quaggle? Why didn't someone tell me there was a genius lurking under that modest exterior? I feel terribly, terribly alarmed. Oh yes, terribly."

Quintus felt the not-so-subtle dig and shifted uncomfortably. He noticed one rather peculiar fact. Phylis' hands had balled into small, but capable looking fists, and her lips were pressed together like a pressed rosebud. Given plenty of time, Quintus might have deduced something very encouraging from this, but, unfortunately, time was called at that precise instant by the stormy arrival of Phineas P. Puff.

The outer door banged inward and a loud, blustering voice filled the spacious office with unintelligible sound. Everyone within range of Mr. Puff's vocal chords immediately dug into their work with highly suspicious alacrity.

Mr. Puff, a short, pompous man with a red face and small eyes strode to the center of the office and glared about.

"Not satisfied," he suddenly bellowed. "Not satisfied at all. Everything gone to pot. Lots of changes coming around here. Shake things up. Needs it."

Quintus shrank against the wall and tried to blend like a chameleon against the mahogany woodwork. It would be terrible if Mr. Puff discovered him away from his desk at this hour of the day.

But Mr. Puff apparently had more important things on his mind.

"Want copy," he said loudly. "New copy, bright copy, funny. Gotta be funny now. Everybody wants to laugh. I don't know why. I've got nothing to laugh about. But I don't count. Gotta think of the customer." Mr. Puff paused to breathe. Then: "Get me some funny copy. I don't care what your job is now. If you can get funny copy you're a copy writer." Mr. Puff paused again and glared slowly about at the faces of his assembled workers.

"Hello," he said quietly. Then he

marched to his office.

WHEN it was safe, Gordon Strong laughed, pulled a sheaf of papers from his pocket.

"Right up my alley," he said smugly. "I've already written the copy on Snatzy's Shorts, and it's just what he wants. Light, funny copy."

He tossed the copy on the desk before Phylis and Quintus.

Quintus read it with wistful envy. It was excellent copy. Smooth, clever and sophisticated. It had just the light sparkle and gay snap that was required for Snatzy's Shorts for Men.

"Clever?" Strong stated rather than asked.

Phylis' small chin hardened.

"Not too clever," she said casually. "I think Quintus could do as well. In fact, I'd go so far as to say he could do better."

An expression of incredulity crossed the bland face of Gordon Strong. It was followed immediately by one of delighted, undiluted amusement.

"I'll bet he can," he chortled, "and I'll bet I'm going to give him the chance. Who am I to hold back genius such as his?"

He handed the copy to Quintus.

"Here, Lad," he said with mock solemnity, "take these home with you. Study them carefully. Then just knock out something better. I'm sure you're as confident as your very charming champion."

Quintus almost strangled.

"I—I can't," he blurted. He looked despairingly at Phylis. "I can't write better than that," he wailed. "I'm just a dub, Phylis. I'm glad you think I can do it but honest, I really can't."

"Will you stop apologizing for yourself?" Phylis cried angrily. "Now take that copy, and if you don't write something that will make this look like juvenile babblings by comparison I'll never —I'll never talk to you again."

"Phylis!" Quintus cried, in shocked anguish.

Her chin tilted stubbornly.

"I mean just that," she said.

Gordon Strong was laughing openly now.

"Old Man Snatzy will be here tomorrow to see his new copy," he said between chuckles, "so have your contribution ready. And just in case he doesn't go wild about it, you'd better bring mine back with you. He might like to see my copy *after* he sees yours."

Quintus stared helplessly from Phylis' firm, unrelenting chin to Strong's mocking smile and a baffled, hurt feeling of rage grew hot in him, and finally bubbled over.

"A—all right," he said, searching desperately for something devastating and epigrammatic, "I—I'll show you!"

HOURS later, Quintus sat hunched over a table in his small walk-up room and wished fervently that he could recall his brash promise. Before him were spread pages of copy and innumerable layout designs, the results of four hours of feverish work. With a weary sigh, Quintus laid down his pencil and sagged despairingly against the back of his chair.

"They're no good," he muttered. "No good at all. My best effort looks terrible beside Gordon Strong's copy."

It was almost midnight. Quintus could hardly keep his heavy-lidded eyes open. Only the thought of how much hung in the balance kept him at his task. If he didn't get an inspiration before morning—he shuddered at the thought. His chances at getting a copy writing job would be about on a par with his chances with Phylis—which of course would be nil.

In the midst of these black musings

there came a sudden, sharp rap on the door. The next second the door opened and a tall, gaunt creature, dressed in somber black and carrying a tray before him, entered the room.

"Hello, Professor," Quintus said unenthusiastically. "I'm sorry but I'm pretty busy right now. Won't have much time to talk."

The Professor smiled tolerantly and shoved Quintus' copy to one side to make place for the tray he was carrying.

"I just brought you a little drink," he said genially, "It will help you think better."

Quintus glanced dubiously at the greenish liquid in the glass and then back at the Professor. Neither sight reassured him particularly.

The Professor was a landmark at the boarding house. He had been a philosophic and cheerful inmate since the time, years ago, when his baggage and scientific paraphernalia had been seized by the management in lieu of rent. It had been a costly move for the management. For the Professor had refused to part with his precious apparatus and had settled down comfortably in the basement of the boarding house and had remained there ever since. Now he helped a bit with work around the house and puttered with his equipment. He had developed a strong attachment to Quintus and delighted to surprise him with special delicacies which he pilfered shamelessly from the well-stocked cuisine.

He stood before Quintus now, beaming fondly at his expression of dubious bewilderment.

Quintus, loath to hurt the Professor's feelings, picked up the glass gingerly. "What's in it?" he asked uneasily.

The Professor's smile widened. He shook a coy finger under Quintus' nose.

"Mustn't ask questions," he chortled with vast good humor. "I'll tell you what it is—after you drink it."

Quintus chose to overlook the obvious flaw in this argument.

"All right," he sighed resignedly. "Anything for peace in the family."

HE tilted the glass and drank. The green liquid flowed down his throat with surprising smoothness. He set the glass back on the tray and smacked his lips. The stuff wasn't bad, he conceded. Had a sort of tangy, solid taste to it.

"Okay," he said. "I fulfilled my end of the bargain. Now it's up to you. What was in that stuff?"

The Professor beamed with childish delight.

"Hah," he cried, "you didn't recognize it, then did you? I made that from grapefruit juice and — and the formula I found in your room this morning."

"Formula!" Quintus gasped.

"Sure thing," the professor nodded his head vigorously. "Found some of that advertising copy of yours on the table and copied the formula right from your figures."

"Why you couldn't," Quintus gasped. "That formula didn't make any sense. It was just supposed to—to bring out a point in the advertisement. It was supposed to attract the reader's interest, nothing more."

"I don't care," the Professor said promptly. "It may not have made sense but it made a good drink. I saw the formula and something about the way those symbols and letters fitted in kind of caught my eye. I've got a great eye for formulae you know. I said to myself, I said, a formula that pretty must be of some use. So I took it down stairs and mixed it up. Got some potash and calcium and stirred the thing up. Then I put in the grapefruit juice and there you have it. If nothing happens

to you, I'll put it on the market. Might make a good liver extract."

"If nothing happens to me!" Quintus echoed in horror. "You mean you didn't try this on any one else before you gave it to me?"

"That's right," the Professor said genially, "you're the first. If you feel anything funny let me know. Can't put it on the market till it's just right. Well," the Professor moved to the door, "good night now. See you tomorrow," he paused in the doorway to add cheerfully, "that is, if you're up. Good night."

"Good night," Quintus quavered. His head was reeling. His stomach felt very queer. He looked down at the copy into which he had been trying to put spark and zest, and groaned. He got up groggily and moved to his bed. He stretched out wearily. A dozen weird, confused thoughts chased around in his head. Phylis Whitney and Gordon Strong were writing humorous copy together while the Professor and Mr. Puff drank calcium highballs and laughed happily. Then he must have dropped off. . . .

THE sun in his eyes awoke him. He peered uncertainly about and then clambered anxiously to his feet. His alarm clock said eight o'clock. That was desperately late for him. He looked down at his rumpled clothes and decided he wouldn't have time to change them. He shoved his thin hair from his eyes and moved to the door.

Then he remembered the copy he had promised to write.

He paused in his tracks and his shoulders slumped with the weight of his gloom and despair. Gone was any chance of making good his wild boast. Phylis would be through with him and he could already hear Gordon Strong's superior laugh and sarcastic jibes. He picked up Strong's copy and stuck it glumly into his inner pocket. He looked at the alarm clock again and, for one revolutionary instant, he thought of defying everyone with the grand smashing gesture of arriving late at the office. But years of habit had a strong hold on Quintus' actions, and, after a brief but losing battle he turned wearily and left his room.

He paused at the head of the stairs, thinking gloomily of his complete and dismal failure. Suddenly a hoarse feminine voice disrupted his melancholy reverie.

"Quaggle!" the piercing hail emanated from the dining room just under Quintus' feet. "Are you coming down to breakfast or ain't you?"

Quintus started. Goodness, he thought wildly, on top of everything else, I'll have Mrs. Murphy after me.

"Coming," he shouted.

He started down the steps—and something happened!

He paused in the middle of a step, every muscle, every nerve in his body suddenly contracting into rock-hard rigidity. Before he had a chance to cry out, he was falling. Falling with majestic, ponderous deliberation. Like a giant redwood he toppled, gathering speed with every inch he fell. He could hear the air rushing out from under him. He tried frantically to throw his hands before his face but it was a futile attempt. His arms seemed bound to his side, his whole body felt as if it were in the relentless grip of some mighty contracting force.

Then he struck. He heard a rending, tearing crash as the stairway gave way beneath his body. Through the ragged, splintered wood his rigid body plummeted, smashing everything under it, until it landed with a mighty thumping crash on the dining room floor.

He could hear Mrs. Murphy screaming and crying to the saints for deliv-

erance. There was roaring Babel of voices beating against Quintus' ears as he struggled dazedly to his feet. But he heard them not. His mind was oblivious to all but the incredible phenomenon it had just recorded. Unbelievingly he stared upward at the jagged rent in the ceiling and stairs.

It was *not* a hallucination. It had actually happened. He had crashed through the floor just as if he weighed tons. He remembered then the paralysis that had assailed him momentarily and his confusion increased. What *had* happened to him?

IT was about this time that the voices began to filter in.

"You'll pay for ever cent of it," Mrs. Murphy shouted for the tenth time. I'll have no April fool monkeyshines in my house."

One of Quintus' fellow boarders, a dark-haired paunchy lawyer, grabbed him by the arm.

"Don't listen to her," he cried. "We'll settle this in court. You might have been killed!" He wheeled on the Mrs. Murphy, face crimson with indignation, "What are you running, may I ask, a death trap? Is it that you don't like Mr. Quaggle personally that you try to kill him? I will ask you that in court and before you can answer I will get a continuance for my fine client and friend, Mr. Quaggle."

"Please," Quintus said tearfully, "I don't want any trouble. It was my fault. Something funny happened to me. I don't know just what it was but—"

Mrs. Murphy paid him no heed. Her eyes and attention were focused on the righteous figure of the lawyer.

"So," she said with terrible calmness. "It's a death trap I'm runnin' is it? Well let me tell you Mr. Wolf," her voice rose to a strident scream, "you'll think it is before I get through with you."

Mr. Wolf backed hastily away. Mrs. Murphy followed grimly. Mr. Wolf turned suddenly and sprinted toward the kitchen and Mrs. Murphy, with a Comanche scream, gave chase.

Quintus wheeled and ducked out of the house. His mind was churning at full speed but it wasn't giving him any answers to the baffling questions it presented. He groaned to himself as he hurried down the street. He was almost late for work now. If he didn't get to work with Gordon Strong's copy on Snatzy's Shorts, he'd be through forever with Puff and Huff. And, he thought miserably, with Phylis too. But even more than these disastrous possibilities, he pondered on the amazing thing that had happened to him on the staircase. It was baffling and incredible but still it had happened. He wiped his damp brow with a trembling hand.

HE was still thinking of this when he started across the street. A large truck was bearing down on him and Quintus quickened his pace to get out of its path. He was in the middle of the street and the truck was within twenty feet of him when it happened again.

A sudden rigidity seized him. Every muscle froze into rock-like hardness. Poised on one foot, arms flailing the air, Quintus concretized into statuesque immobility, presenting a spectacle that might remind one of a motheaten Discus Thrower.

He was powerless to move, powerless to scream, powerless to even move the muscles of his face. He heard the shrill screech of the truck's brakes, heard the whining protest of the tires and then he felt a jar travel through his rigid frame. He fell, slowly, ponderously to the pavement. He felt nothing, no pain, no sensation at all. To his

horror he heard the concrete pavement crack and chip as he struck and rolled. Lying on his side he could see the truck —on the sidewalk, its hood rammed through the front of a grocery store.

The driver was climbing from the cab, staring at Quintus' figure with incredulous horror and shock.

A police whistle blasted through the air and then a large blue-coated, red-faced figure came into Quintus' range of vision. He glanced at Quintus in amazement and then turned his attention to the driver of the demolished truck.

"What happened?" Quintus heard him ask.

"Chief," the driver gasped hysterically, "I swear I'm telling the truth. That guy," he pointed at Quintus, "walked right in front of my truck. Just as calm as you please. Then he stopped right there in front of my truck, like he was asking me to hit him. I try to swing out but I can't make it. I hit him and then the truck goes out of control. So help me officer that's the straight of it."

"Hmmmm," the copper said thoughtfully," "we'll see what our friend has to say." He stepped over to Quintus, stopped, grabbed him by the shoulder. "See here—"

His voice broke off and a wondering expression crossed his face. He straightened up slowly and fixed an accusing eye on the truck driver.

"So you're tryin' to fool Tim Doolin are you?" he bellowed. "It walked in front of you did it? Well maybe you can tell me how it is a stone statue *walked* in front of your truck?"

Quintus listened in stunned disbelief. The officer was calling him a statue. That wasn't possible. It was—Quintus gave up thinking. A blanket of quiet despair settled over him.

The truck driver had dropped to his knees, was shaking Quintus frantically.

"He walked, I tell you," he shouted desperately, "walked in front of my truck and then stood there without moving."

"What're you givin' me?" the copper roared. "You can see it's a solid stone statue can't you? Some devil's helper must've put some clothes on it and dragged it here for a prank."

"No, no," the truck driver screamed hysterically. "He walked I tell you. Maybe he's turned to stone or somethin'."

QUINTUS heard the words and they sounded like a death knell. *Turned to stone!* That's what had happened. But why had he snapped out of it the first time it had attacked him? For he was now sure that this was the explanation of his drop through the stairs at Mrs. Murphy's boarding house.

This numbing realization came to Quintus as he lay helpless and rigid in the street while the altercation between the officer and the truck driver raged over him.

It was not a comforting thought. He searched his mind desperately for some explanation and then, with the force of a pile driver, a thought burst into his consciousness.

The Professor's queer compound of calcium and potash and grapefruit juice that he had drunk the night before must be responsible for this amazing transformation. The hodge podge of chemical formulas that he had written into the sample advertising copy must have contained some mysterious or accidental properties that would account for his metamorphosis. It was a wild, unimaginable conclusion but it was the only one his tired, distraught brain could reach.

A wailing siren put a period to his thoughts. Seconds later a black maria

pulled up to a stop and a half dozen policemen climbed out.

"What's up?" the sergeant snapped.

"This drunken son of satan," the copper roared, pointing a thick red finger at the truck driver, "ran into this statue that some wag put in the middle of the street. Now he's tryin' to tell me that it isn't a statue at all. He says it *walked* in front of him, if you please, and waited there for him to run into it."

The sergeant scratched his head. Then he prodded Quintus with his toe.

"It's a statue all right," he said grimly, "a rock statue." He turned to two of his men, nodded toward the truck driver. "Throw him in the wagon, book him for drivin' while intoxicated and insultin' the intelligence of a police officer."

"But," the driver protested hysterically, "I tell you he *did* walk. He walked right in front of my truck and—"

His sentence was rudely interrupted at this point as two husky policemen grabbed him by the arms, dragged him to the patrol wagon, and tossed him inside. A second later the motor roared to life and the black maria rumbled away.

"I've had the museum notified," the sergeant said," returning from the call box, "and they're sending a truck over right away." He glanced down at Quintus and shook his head. "Though why anybody should want to keep something like that is beyond me."

QUINTUS heard this with growing anger and mortification. While he was smarting under these emotions he heard a truck turn into the street, pull up to him and stop. Lettered on the side of the truck was the information: San Francisco Municipal Museum.

Quintus could see men crawling from the rear tailgate of the truck with ropes and tackle in their hands. They went to work speedily and efficiently. Ropes were draped about Quintus' recumbent form and the truck was backed up next to him. He heard a hoist crank revolving creakingly and the next instant he was rising from the pavement. Four feet, five feet he rose before a couple of the men swung his two-ton body into the truck. Then the hoist rachet was released and Quintus dropped to the floor of the truck with a stony rattle.

"Don't know how they got it away," he heard one of the workmen say bewilderedly. "Must've stole it from the museum last night with a truck and a block and tackle. Can't see how any man would want a silly looking thing like that, though?"

"Funny thing," another added. "I mean those clothes on the statue. They're regular clothes. They wouldn't waste good clothes on a statue would they?"

"It's not our worry," the first replied. "All we got to do is get this thing back to the museum and our troubles are over."

Quintus heard the tailgate clam with a banging sound of finality. Seconds later the motor started and the truck rumbled away. Quintus felt an anguished despair creeping over him. On his way to the museum to be displayed like a statue while the Puff and Huff advertising agency tore their hair and damned the day that Quintus Quaggle had entered their employ. It was too much.

On top of these calamities there was Phylis, sweet lovable Phylis who had had confidence in him. What would she think of him? Maybe when the memory was no longer bitter she would come down to the museum on Saturday afternoons and put flowers around his neck. This was a touching thought

but not very encouraging.

The truck rumbled on and Quintus thought of the language he would use if he ever got back to normal. He had reached the end of his not too extensive vocabulary when the truck stopped with a jar.

The doors were opened. The ropes and hoists did their work again and finally Quintus' rigid body was wheeled into the museum on a dolly.

A MAN with a black satin smock came over and peered closely at Quintus.

"I don't remember this one," Quintus heard him mutter, "but wheel it over to the municipal gallery. We can use something innocent-looking over there. The wives of the Municipal board are coming here today to protest against the indecent art work they claim I've brought in here. With this statue to show 'em we may get by."

The laborers rolled Quintus through the museum, past the countless *objet d'art* that were littered about the floor, through to a narrow aisle that led to a group of statuary entitled simply, MUNICIPAL EXHIBITION OF SAN FRANCISCAN EXPRESSIONISTIC SURREALISM.

Quintus was wheeled in front of this imposing group and unceremoniously dumped to the floor. His soul was writhing with the indifference and lack of interest displayed in him but there was nothing he could do about it. He could see a clock on the wall and its hands pointed to nine o'clock. Mr. Snatzy was just about stalking into the Huff and Puff agency to demand a look at the copy which Quintus had in his breast pocket. The situation was lost now. Everything had gone smash.

In the middle of these gloomy thoughts Quintus heard a number of voices approaching him. They belonged, it turned out, to three smock-coated men, evidently museum attendants. They stopped at sight of him, perplexed. Then they hurried to his side. Quintus could hear snatches of their conversation.

"Never saw this before."

"Somebody put some clothes on it for a practical joke."

"Well we haven't got all day. Let's take 'em off."

Quintus tried desperately to open his mouth, to shout the truth to them but it was no go. He could feel his clothes being torn from his body, his shoes jerked off, his shirt removed. In a matter of minutes Quintus was stretched on the floor with nothing but his shorts left to hide his mortification.

"Get a jack and a hoist," he heard a voice say, "we'll prop this specimen up in place."

Within a few minutes Quintus found himself on top of a pedestal, poised on one foot, arms outflung. It was the supremely embarrassing moment of his life, but not by a flicker of an eyelid or the blush of a cheek did he betray his humiliation. He stood there on one foot, a thin narrow-chested little man, with a furtive, hunted expression stamped in stone on his face, posed like a poor facsimile of a heroic Grecian athlete.

The museum attendants laughed uncontrollably.

"Wait a minute," one of them said between spasms, "we haven't taken the shorts off yet. That's why the blamed statue looks so funny. It's the shorts, they make it look almost human."

Suddenly a babel of voices could be heard over the hum of the museum; feminine voices, strident and angry, coming closer and closer.

"The jig's up," one of the attendants hissed, "here come those women that was goin' to look over this group this

morning. We'll get the sack for this sure."

"Not if they don't see us," another snapped. "Quick! Grab those clothes and those shoes. We gotta clear out of here. No time to get those shorts off that statue now. Scram!"

THERE was a frantic scurrying of footsteps and Quintus was left alone. Alone in his shorts to meet the indignant women and the photographers who now came tumbling through the narrow aisle and into the room that housed the SAN FRANCISCAN statuary group.

Quintus felt wave after wave of embarrassment flooding over him. With all his spirit he longed to flee, to leap from the pedestal and hide himself behind something more concealing than the shorts he was wearing. Pink striped shorts, he recalled with a shudder. Down the legs of the shorts the word *Snatzy* was formed by looping violets intermingling with trailing hyacinths. As if he need that to make his humiliation complete. He had been wearing them in the feeble hope that they might inspire him to write of them with more effectiveness and sparkle. He was sorry now that he had ever donned them.

The women and the photographers were milling in front of him now. From the horde of angry women uncomplimentary epithets floated up to him.

"Disgraceful!"

"Revolting!"

"It should be smashed!"

The photographers moved in close with their flashbulbs raised. The women gathered in a determined circle at the base of Quintus' pedestal as if they wanted to smash it and him on the spot.

"Just a minute, ladies," one of the photographers called." We need one clear shot before you do anything violent."

An instant later a brilliant, blinding light exploded in the room as eight or ten flash bulbs ignited simultaneously.

Some of the women jumped involuntarily.

So did Quintus Quaggle!

At the instant of the lightning explosion the rigidity flowed from his body, his muscles loosened and—he jumped involuntarily.

He teetered precariously on top of the swaying pedestal and then with a wild cry he crashed to the floor, landing in the center of the throng of astounded women. For a split instant there was a terrible, pregnant silence. Then the women found their voices and made up for their silent second. Their wild, hysterical screams flooded the museum as they fought and clawed to get out of the room. Some of them stared at Quintus as if mesmerized, unable to speak or move.

"I—I'm sorry," Quintus began but that was as far as he got.

With a wild whoop the women came to life and charged after their fleeing sisters, who were chasing after the cameramen.

Quintus was left quite alone.

FOR several seconds he was too amazed to act and then, as full realization struck him, he wheeled and darted down the corridor taken by the museum attendants, who had purloined his clothes. But it was not his clothes that Quintus was after primarily. It was the Snatzy shorts copy that was in the pocket of his coat. If he could get that, get to the agency, there might still be hope.

He rounded a corner, jerked open a door and stumbled into a furnace room. His eyes swept the room expectantly. There was nothing—his heart suddenly pounded hopefully. There on a garbage heap was a brown coat. Hardly daring to believe his good luck, Quintus

dragged the garment from the ashes, slid his hand into the pocket—felt smooth crisp paper under his fingers. Holding his breath, Quintus pulled out the sheaf of papers. A glance convinced him that he had what he wanted.

He shoved them hurriedly back into the pocket, slipped into the coat. He looked about frantically but he could see nothing of his shoes or pants. It was at this moment that the Hero in Quintus Quaggle rose to the surface.

"To hell with 'em," he cried stoutly. "This copy has got to get through."

With this high resolve burning in his heart, Quintus set out. Short on pants but long on courage, shirtless but plucky, Quintus wrapped the skimpy coat about him like a shield.

He raced through Bay's park and was mistaken by a group of maypole maidens for one of their number, who happened to be missing. An irate copper chased him through the park and he escaped durance vile by leaping on the rear bumper of a car that pulled out from the curb and roared away.

This was just the start. For a frantically hectic half hour, Quintus dodged women and police, clung to trucks and cars, and finally, panting and desperate, stumbled into the lobby of the building which housed the Puff and Huff advertising agency. Fortunately the elevator operator knew Quintus and, with some grave misgivings, whisked him to the sixteenth floor.

Quintus staggered from the elevator, bare-footed and bare-legged, clutching the Snatzy shorts copy in his hand like a banner. It might not yet be too late. He shoved open the doors to the agency just in time to hear a fat, stormy, bald-headed man bellow:

"I'm through forever with Puff and Huff and more than that. I'm through for good. Where is the copy you are going to have for me? Do you think it is funny to keep Samuel Snatzy waiting for two hours? I give you no more chances but one. Produce that copy or I go. And with me goes my business!"

Quintus swallowed weakly. No one had noticed him yet. Mr. Puff and Gordon Strong were trying futilely to placate Mr. Snatzy. Phylis Whitney was at her desk, he noticed miserably. For one humiliating instant Quintus looked down at his nude nether extremities and then he drew a deep breath. The die was cast.

"Gentlemen," he said weakly, "here's the copy."

HEADS turned as if they were one hinge. Every eye in the room focused on Quintus' pathetic, half-clad figure. For a long minute a stunned silence reverberated in the room. A stunned silence that was broken by the head of the Puff and Huff agency.

"You blithering nincoompoop," Mr. Puff raged. "Give me that copy and get out of my office before I have you thrown into jail. You've almost lost me my biggest account. Where have you been? No! Don't answer that. It doesn't matter. Get out! *Get out!*"

"You—you mean," Quintus faltered, "you—you don't want me here any more. You—you sort of want me to get out. Is that it?"

"Yes that's *it!*" Puff almost screamed. "I want you to get out and stay out forever."

"Not a very clever idea, Quaggle," Gordon Strong said smoothly. "Trying to steal my copy to make me look bad. You should have known you couldn't get away with it."

"I didn't try and steal your copy," Quaggle said beseechingly. "Something—something very funny happened to me."

Quintus saw Phylis then. She looked

very angry and determined. She faced Mr. Puff and Gordon Strong, hands on her hips.

"Why don't you give him a chance?" she blazed. "You're condemning him without giving him a chance to explain what delayed him." She turned to Quintus. "Tell them," she said pleadingly. "Tell them why you weren't able to get here with Gordon's copy."

Quintus moistened his lips. He had a good excuse, the best excuse in the world, but who would believe him? He might as well be hung for a steer as a calf or something. He squared his shoulders.

"I haven't got a thing—" he started, but he never finished the sentence.

The doors behind him were burst open. Two agency men dashed into the office waving papers over their head.

"Look at this," one of them yelled. "Talk about advertising ideas. This is the great grand-daddy of them all. Snatzy shorts are made from this day onward."

They flung the papers to Mr. Puff and Mr. Snatzy, and Quintus staggered from the edge of the crowd, crestfallen and despondent. Suddenly a war whoop blasted through the office. Quintus jerked his head up just as Mr. Puff and Mr. Snatzy bore down on him, waving the papers excitedly.

"Why didn't you tell us?" Mr. Puff demanded delightedly. "It's the biggest idea in years."

"My boy," Mr. Snatzy cried breathlessly. "It was worth waiting for."

In unison they spread the papers before Quintus' widening eyes. He stared at the front page spread and his knees wobbled.

For there in screaming black headlines was the legend: SNATZY'S SHORTS ARE STATUARY SENSATION! Beneath this headline was a full page picture. A full page picture of Quintus Quaggle poised on a teetering pedestal, clad in a pink-striped pair of shorts, plainly marked SNATZY on either leg.

QUINTUS sagged weakly. "B—but," he protested, "it wasn't really—"

"Don't be modest, my boy," Mr. Puff said grandly. "I know genius when I see it. That's the kind of copy I want. Humorous stuff, funny stuff. Makes this drivel of Strong's look stupid. I want more of this stuff, Quaggle, and you're my man. Name your price and I'll meet it."

"Don't say anything," Phylis whispered in his ear, "until—until we talk it over."

Quintus put his arm around her shoulder almost, it seemed, by instinct.

"All right, Darling," he said confidently.

"Now look, Quaggle," Puff said suddenly, "I've got a campaign lined up in New York and I want you to get to work on it. It's a campaign conducted by some civic group and they want a lot of advertisements to show how heavy and unbearable the taxes have become. If you can get me a good idea on that we'll make millions."

Snatzy beamed fondly and patted Quintus on the back.

"He can do it," he said proudly. "That boy's a genius I'm telling you."

Quintus thought desperately. He knew he wasn't expected to pull an advertising campaign out of his hat but if he just could get an idea right on the spot it would be terribly impressing.

He thought feverishly and little by little an idea grew.

"Look," he cried excitedly, "I haven't got it all, but listen. We have billboards printed, showing the average, middle class man."

"Go on," Puff said tensely.

"We show this average man," Quintus was thinking rapidly, "almost crushed under a mighty avalanche of taxes and assessments."

"It's good," Puff cried. "Go on!"

"There's this little fellow," Quintus said excitedly, "bowed under, crushed to the floor by this huge load. It's so heavy he can't stand under it." Quintus knelt down, arms outspread. "He's doing his best trying to hold it up but it's no use. He's crumbling under the load, sinking, sinking, sinking. . . ."

Quintus' tongue clove to the roof of his mouth. A horribly familiar sensation enveloped him, freezing him into immobility and rock-like hardness. He heard a crunching, cracking under his feet and then with rumbling speed Quintus crashed through the floor.

A stunned, unbelieving silence gripped the office. Mr. Puff was the first to recover. He stepped forward gingerly and peered through the ragged hole. Then he looked solemnly about the awe-stricken group.

"Colossal," he whispered reverently. "Colossal!"

« « ODD SCIENCE FACTS » »

WITH Russia still a deep dark mystery, the brilliant scientist Peter Kapitza has not been heard from since his return to Sovietland in 1935. In the meantime, Prof. Cecil T. Lane of Yale University, making use of a recently discovered rough drawing, has built a machine which produces liquid helium quickly and cheaply. Kapitza's brainchild now makes a quart in about two hours at a cost of $5; the old method took twenty-four hours and cost $50. Prof. Lane uses the liquid helium in his effort to discover a means of transmitting electrical energy without loss.

* * *

A CHIP off a famous old block is Ashley Cooper Hewitt of Pasadena, Cal., grandson of Peter Cooper, builder of the first American locomotive. An aviation and automotive engineer, Hewitt has built a four-cycle, single sleeve-valve motor with only ten moving parts. With a bore and stroke of one and three-fourths inches, the Hewitt engine develops three times the power of an ordinary motor the same size. In fact, it's even more powerful than a supercharged airplane engine of the same dimensions.

* * *

SCIENCE-FICTION writers may be dismayed to learn that the center of the earth, far from being liquid, is very possibly a metal in which hydrogen gas has been dissolved. Thus experiments at Fordham University seem to indicate. If the earth's core is actually solid, all kinds of theories and calculations would be upset.

* * *

MONEY doesn't mean a thing to General Electric. They've just developed a million-volt X-ray tube which gives off energy equivalent to $90,000,000 worth of radium. This super-voltage tube is used to find flaws in large castings for electrical equipment. It photographs through four-inch steel in less than two minutes. The process formerly took an hour.

* * *

UNSIGHTLY and ungainly gas storage tanks need no longer be cluttering up our skylines, a menace to aviation and a temptation to camera fiends. Natural gas can now be liquefied for storage.

Here's how it's done: First ammonia steps the temperature down to 27 degrees below zero, F; then ethylene to minus 150 degrees F. Two additional steps, both secret, complete the process, and bingo! we have a liquid, not a gas!

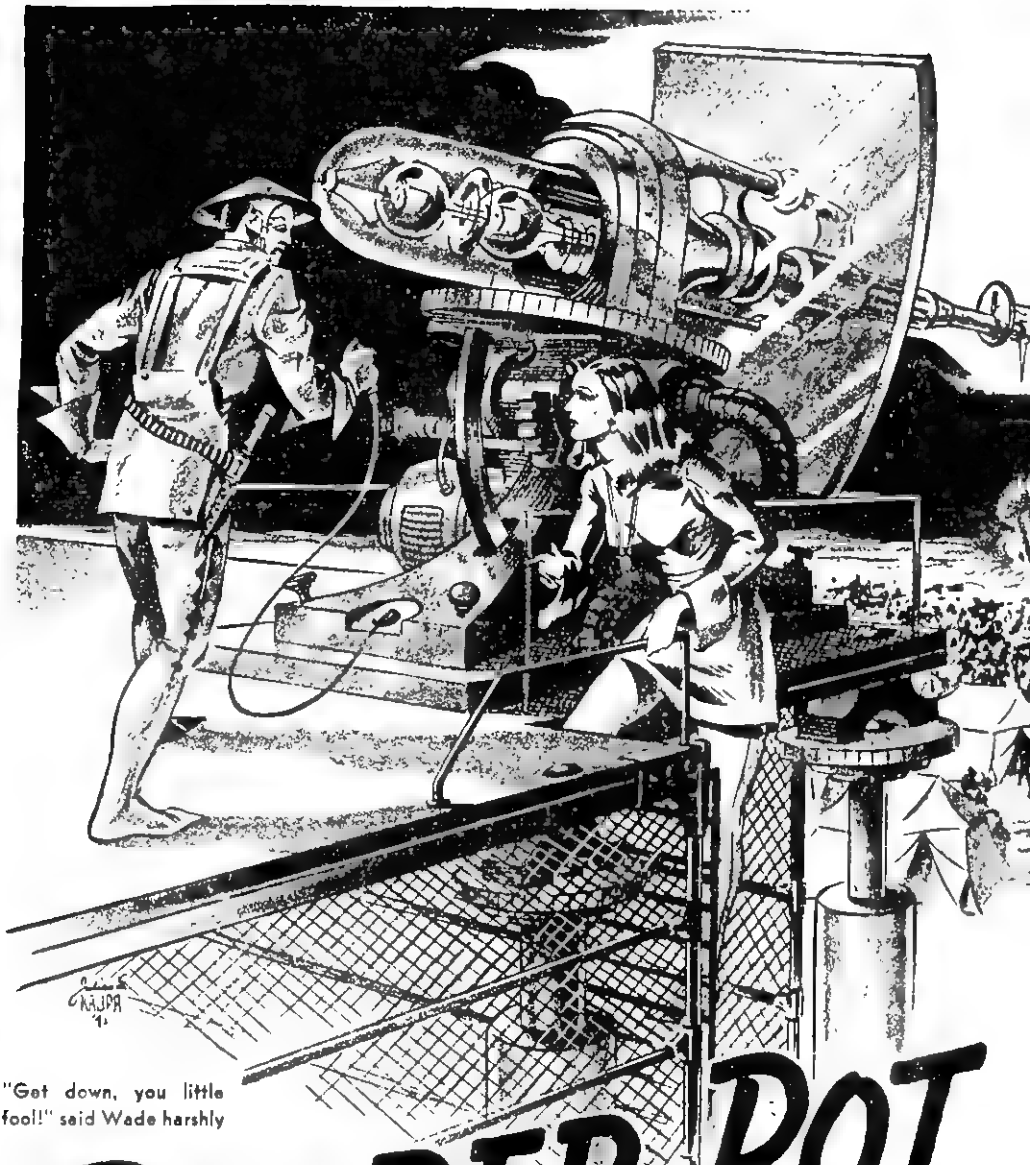
To reverse the process and make this water-colored liquid available to consumers as gas once more, steam is applied.

It has been figured out that a tank with 2,197 cubic feet liquid capacity can hold 15 million cubic feet of liquefied gas.

The first liquid gas storage tank, at Cleveland, is surrounded by a three-foot thickness of cork insulation to maintain the temperature. Since steel becomes brittle at minus 250 degrees F., a special nickel steel was used.

* * *

THE R.A.F. doesn't miss a trick. Now comes a new gadget—aluminum powder, dropped on the surface above a submarine to form an easily visible "slick." The warbird, you see, is traveling too fast to keep the *Untersecboot* in view. Returning, he spots the location and jerks his bomb release.—*Arthur T. Harris.*



"Get down, you little fool!" said Wade harshly

PEPPER POT PLANET

by Duncan Farnsworth

Wade Hawkins and Brad Skene ought to have known better than to mix into Martian revolutions and plots, but Tonya was beautiful—if not sincere!

IF there's anything sane or logical about a Martian, I've never noticed it. As a race, Martians are the wildest, most hot-headed, utterly unpredictable band of zanies in the entire interplanetary chain. Charming, yes. Courtly, certainly. Gallant, why, naturally. But goofy—wow!

You don't have to take my word for this. Ask Wade Hawkins, the rotund, cherubic faced space chum with whom I got my first taste of Martian hocus pocus. Wade will tell you the same thing I do, for he's still up there in that hornet's nest. Maybe I better go back to the start of the thing.

Wade and I had just gotten the bounce, the old heave-ho, from Transplanetary Spaceways Company. We jockeyed space freight back and forth along the interplanetary chain for that band of legalized robbers for about three years. I was pilot, and Wade was my co. But then there was an incident in which four quarts of Venusian gin and a wench from Saturn figured prominently. Transplanetary Spaceways didn't give us two weeks notice. They just gave us a month's pay and a don't-come-back.

We were left stranded on Mars. Of course, we had just enough left for a passage back to Earth. But that dismissal dough was burning holes in our tunic pockets, and there wouldn't be another space liner going back for another, uh, er—we ended up in a Martian Cafe.

Wade was pretty tanked as we sat at a dinky little table in that Martian night spot. I don't think I was feeling any pain, either.

"S'a damn good thing," Wade muttered, his round red face gleaming. "Been wanting to quit those penny-pinchers fer a long time!"

"Yeah," I answered, bending my elbow. "Cheapskates. Didn' 'ppreciate us anyway!"

We might have gone on like that indefinitely, giving our ex-employers hell all night, if a luscious, raven-haired, Martian cutie hadn't hipped past our table at that moment. Wade and I were on our feet simultaneously. I was a little bit more sober, so I got the words out first.

"Hiya, honey," I made a low bow. "Wouldja mind pausing to converse with a forlorn stranger?"

"*Two* forlorn strangers!" Wade glared balefully at me.

The Martian Miss hesitated, her white teeth flashing against that luuuhvly background of raven hair and slightly dusky complexion. I was mentally wagering my very best pair of space boots against a plugged Venusian nickle that there wasn't a prettier gal anywhere in the universe, when she answered.

"Why, I theenk I would be deelighted!"

There was a wild scramble, while Wade and I battled to get her to sit beside each of us, but she settled the dispute by pulling up a chair and sitting down between us.

"I'm Brad Skene," I told her pronto. "And this guy," I pointed to Wade, "is named Hawkins."

"*Wade* Hawkins," my cherubic chum put in gloweringly.

"I am so veeery glad to know you both," she smiled. "Earthmen are sooo nice." My heart was zooming up and down like a degravitator needle. "My name is Tonya, Tonya Noronha," she concluded.

I was handing out my best loving simper, with occasional glaring glances at Wade. And Wade was giving forth with his finest heart-torn glance, with mingled glares at me—when we both noticed that the smile had suddenly left Tonya's lovely red lips. She wasn't looking at either of us. Her head was turned slightly toward the door of the cafe, and her face had gone suddenly pale!

My eyes followed her gaze. Two uniformed Martian guards had just entered, big, black-haired, beetle-browed fellows, and were craning their thick necks around to give the joint the look-over.

"Queek!" Tonya's voice was a soft hiss, and she reached into the, er, ah, throat of her tunic, pulling forth a sheaf of papers. "Here," she whispered fiercely. "Hide these, please!"

Automatically, I reached out and took the papers. Automatically, I shoved them down into the side of my space boot. But my eyes were still fixed on the Martian guards. They were dressed in those spangled, purple, comic-opera uniforms that Martians love to affect. But there was nothing comic about the drawn atomic pistols they both held!

THE music was still playing, and voices around us were still babbling, but Tonya was rising to her feet. She was breathing hard and fast—what a figure she made!—and there was a hunted look in those gorgeous dark eyes.

"Hey," Wade said. "Where'ya going?"

"Goodbye, gentlemen," Tonya breathed. "I will see you later."

"Hey!" I was on my feet. "Not so fast!" I was thinking of those papers in my boot. "Wait a minute!"

But Tonya, moving fast, was shoving through the crowded tables, head-

ing for a side door of the cafe. And as I looked up, I saw the two Martian guards less than five yards away and heading for us—fast!

Wade—as I said before—was a little foggier than I, and he was gazing in open-mouthed stupidity at the girl's retreating figure. He didn't even see the Martian guards until they were on us. And then I was yanking Wade to his feet.

"Nyaaaaah!" snarled one of the guards, and I didn't like his tone. "Tonya Noronha was weeth you. She geeve you something. You geeve to us, queek!" He extended a huge paw.

Wade had just noticed the guards.

"I don't like these guys," he began is his customarily bland fashion. And then, before I could say another word, my cherubic chum had snapped forth with a right hook into the face of the uniformed Martian nearest him!

I must have reacted from sheer force of habit, because, somehow, in the space of the next three seconds, I lifted the table high and shoved it with everything I had—into the face of the Martian whose paw was extended!

The guy Wade had biffed was sprawled out flat on the floor, his atomic pistol having been lost in the shuffle. But he wasn't out, and he was clawing to his feet like an enraged bull ape, bellowing thunder. Wade was grinning delightedly, waiting for the Martian to gain his feet. The man I hit with the table didn't go out, either. But he went down, and his atomic pistol was exploding wildly at the ceiling. By now people were screaming and the whole joint was a frantic, tearing slug-fest. Everyone was picking a partner and going to it. Mars is like that. Drop a pin and you start a revolution.

I grabbed Wade by the collar, still thinking of the papers in my boot, and of Tonya's swift exit. Someone from another table was now taking care of the Martian guard Wade had bopped, so we weren't busy at that instant.

"Come on!" I shouted. "We gotta find that girl!"

Somehow we fought our way through that confusion toward the side exit which Tonya had used. And then we were out on a narrow little side street, looking wildly up and down. But there was no sight of Tonya, just a few sleepy-eyed Martian beggars leaning against the walls.

"Hell," I stormed. "She got away. Probably never see her again."

"Yeah," Wade muttered disconsolately, "and whatta babe!"

I could agree with my space buddy, but I was thinking more of those papers than anything else. I could still feel them in the side of my space boot. We were walking slowly along the dingy little street now, and I remembered that Wade had probably been too stinking pickled at the moment to notice. I told him about the papers.

He blinked foolishly. "Geeze, I didn't notice. You say you still got 'em in your space boot?"

I nodded. "Well, let's take a look at them," Wade suggested. Simple, but it hadn't occurred to me until now.

We stopped, and I bent down and pulled forth the papers. I had them in my hands when one of the sleepy-eyed beggars stepped forth. The fellow was ragged and dirty, but he didn't look like a Martian. I couldn't place his planet exactly. But I didn't have time. For in the next instant something klunked me on the back of the skull and I felt myself falling forward, forward, while a million rockets spewed silver spray into a black void. . .

THERE was a familiar vibration buzzing in my bones and drumming

through my aching skull when I opened my eyes again. The first thing I saw was the stretch of platenoid planking on which I was lying, and the next sight to meet my eyes was Wade Hawkin's trussed-up body lying right next to me. In another instant, after trying unsuccessfully to stretch my aching muscles, I realized that I had been expertly bound also. The vibration came from atomic motors throbbing directly beneath us, and I realized that I and my cherubic chum were in a space ship—somewhere!

The compartment in which we were lying was small, obviously built for baggage. And from its size I was able to judge that the space ship itself wasn't any too large. There was a thick, platenoid door—closed—which led to the front of the ship where our captors, whoever they were, were located.

And then I saw that Wade's blue eyes were open and he was staring at me.

"Dammit!" I said, "why didn't you say something? I thought for a minute you might be dead." Wade licked his lips.

"I might as well be," Wade muttered, "with this hangover, plus my aching bean."

"Well," I began.

"Don't ask me where we are," Wade cut in. "You and your Martian cuties. If you could stay away from women, we wouldn't be in the predicament—"

"Why!" I exploded, "you blank, blank son of an asteroid. If you hadn't lost our jobs for us in the first pla—"

"Cut it," Wade said suddenly. "This isn't going to do my head or either of us any good."

I realized he was right, and lapsed into silence. I was thinking, suddenly, about Tonya and those damned papers.

"Some joy," Wade said morosely. "Now, if you'll just gnaw our bonds loose like a good fellow—"

"Cut the sarcasm," I broke in. "We're obviously in a jam. And obviously, we'd better start thinking a way out of it."

"Tonya's aboard the ship," Wade said matter-of-factly.

"Tonya's aboard!" My voice was an astonished bleat.

"Yeah," Wade said in that maddeningly calm voice of his. "She was trussed up beside us for some time. Then they came back and took her out of the compartment."

I felt a strange, sudden sense of relief to know that Tonya hadn't—as I suspected for an instant—been allied with our captors. Then I said:

"They? Who do you mean by 'they'? For the love of—"

"I don't know who they happen to be," Wade said, breaking in sharply. "I'm not an ace sleuth. People. Two Martians, little and dapper and a third, tall and dark and good-looking."

I thought this over. "The papers," I said at last.

"Bright boy," Wade applauded.

And then I could see heads bobbing down toward our door. Two typically Martian faces, moving down the aisle of the space ship toward the windowed compartment in which we lay. Behind them, being half-dragged along, was Tonya!

THE door to our compartment was kicked open, and Tonya was shoved inside by the two Martians. They were slight, dapper fellows, clad in somber black tunics. One of them had a moustache. Then they were gone, and Tonya, bound but for her shapely legs, was beside us.

"Hello," said Tonya brightly. "I am afraid I have caused you two much, much trouble."

"What's this all about?" I demanded, trying to keep my eyes from meeting hers. "Give it straight from the shoulder, Tonya."

"They wanted the papers," Tonya replied simply. Wade rolled over and groaned. "If I hear that phrase again I'll retch," he declared.

"What for?" I was trying to be patient, still trying to avoid the charm of those luuuhvly eyes.

"My father's revolution," said Tonya, and suddenly her slim shoulders were shaking with sobs, and she was bawling like a child.

And with her first sobs, even Wade lost his cynicism, and the old I-love-you gleam came back in his eyes. Me, I was as bad as Wade, or worse. When Tonya cried you wanted to go out and utterly disintegrate every unpleasant thing in the universe that might ever make her cry again. Human beings just weren't meant to stand such appeal.

While Tonya bawled, we got her story. Her old man, General Noronha, was a Martian political leader. Or at least he was the leader of one particular Martian political faction. There are as many political factions on Mars as there are asteroids in space. Tonya had gone to the night spot on instructions from her father, the General, to deliver the papers to one of his spies. They were detailed papers, plans for the exact Hour Of Revolution. Every other hour on Mars is an Hour Of Revolution to some political faction.

The spy hadn't been there when Tonya arrived, probably had been waylaid by Martian guards. So she sat down at our table to put up a front and look around. That's when the two uniformed Martians came in, and the trouble started. How Tonya had intended to get the papers back from me, after handing them over, she didn't explain. Maybe she had a plan to cover that, maybe she didn't. Martians are like that.

Tonya had been stopped by one of those phoney street beggars, probably the same guy who knocked Wade and me out cold. And now here we all were, cozy but quite definitely confined.

"Why did they bring Wade and me along when they'd gotten the papers?" I demanded.

Tonya shrugged between gentle sobs.

"They probably thought you were in on eeet all, and knew too much."

"Where are we now?" Wade asked. "Have you any idea."

"Out in space, somewhere, probably not far from Mars," the girl answered. Then, sobbing even more wildly, she added: "And at theese vereeey minute, they are probably keeling my father!"

IT was an unpleasant thought, and I felt as though I would like personally to strangle anyone who'd touch a hair of her pappy's skull. But I had to know more, so I asked: "Who are the people who brought you back to the compartment just now?"

"Martian guards," she sobbed, "Castro is piloting the ship."

"Castro?" I frowned.

"Castro is the enemy of our Cause!" Tonya said with a sharp, shuddery loathing. "He would like to be the General Commissioner of the Martian State!"

"Now wait a minute," I broke in. "Isn't Castro allied with the present Martian government?"

Tonya shrugged her carefully tied shoulders. "That"—there was scorn in her voice—"is due to fall any day. No, Castro is not one of the present government. He is the leader of another political party. He would like to take over the government, and keep my father from the post of General Com-

missioner of the Martian State!"

I gulped. This was complex, and no maybe. A revolution against a revolution—to see who would perform the revolution supreme! The puzzle must have hit Wade the same way, for he sputtered helplessly. However, this was a Martian setup, and anything went. Besides, Tonya was Tonya, as beautiful as a thousand asteroid angels, and quite sufficient unto herself. "Okay," I finally managed to say. "Now we have a rough idea. Where are we going?"

Tonya's tear stained cheeks lifted, and she gazed into my eyes . . . and when the compartment stopped spinning, she answered:

"No place. No place at all!"

"You mean we're just cruising aimlessly around out here in space?" I blurted.

Tonya nodded. "Passing time, until Castro's evil men have had time to keel my father, had time to thwart heese plans."

I had been looking away from Tonya's eyes, and so I suddenly saw a slight protrusion in the platenoid planking on which we were lying. It gave me an idea.

"Tonya, your feet are unbound; do you think you could pry up the edge of that planking there? It looks like a floor door leading to the motors of this ship!"

Wade rolled over to watch in sudden interest, and Tonya, nodding excitedly, stepped to the loose planking. Bit-by-bit the planking came away, as Tonya pried it loose. Then we were looking down onto the atomic motors thrumming away in the bowels of the ship.

Rolling and inching myself along, I got to the edge of the opening. The motor turbines were red hot, and less than three feet from the floor. I pushed myself over the opening until I was lying on it with my hands—which were tied behind me—dangling down toward the red hot turbine covers.

Tonya was watching me, so everything was all right when my flesh seared along my wrists as they touched the turbine covers. My wrist bonds seared too, and the stench of burned matter wasn't too pleasant. Then I rolled off, hands free, wrists badly scorched!

"There," I said, biting hard on my lower lip. "Now we can get into action!"

THE look in Tonya's eyes made me want to go back and burn myself all over again, just for a repeat performance from her. But I was busy untying Wade's bonds, and he was staring at me with a sort of wordless envy; like a jealous school kid who's seen another punk steel his thunder. Tonya's bonds were next. And then we were all on our feet, breathing fast in the sudden excitement of escape.

"We've got to take it easy," said Wade, obviously trying to get back into the running with Tonya by assuming instant leadership. But he wasn't going to do it as easy as that. I shoved him aside and stepped to the compartment door.

"Yeah, we'll have to take it easy. You wait here with Tonya, and I'll go forward alone."

The compartment door opened easily enough, for they hadn't locked it, realizing that we were bound. As I stepped out, I saw Wade's face, set grimly and burning with envy. I smiled.

"Hold the fort. I'll take care of the rest."

I moved down the aisle of the middle compartment cautiously. Evidently the two Martians and Castro were up in the pilot's compartment. On my way

down the aisle, I grabbed a chemextinguisher, and now I held it ready for a weapon. There was a panel of glass between the middle compartment and the pilot's compartment. But a shade had been drawn down it from the inside.

I hesitated. Supposing, as they probably were, the boys in the pilot's compartment were armed? I had only a chemextinguisher—a good weapon, but not against an atomic pistol or two, or three.

But then I saw those eyes of Tonya's again, mentally. And I felt very brave, and very foolish, and oh-so-damned-dumb. I stepped up to the door of the pilot's compartment and swung it open.

"Hold everything!" I shouted dramatically, springing into the compartment and waving my makeshift weapon. But I didn't get any answer—or any argument. The three men were stretched out cold on the long seat before the instrument panels—snoozing!

And then I saw the whyfor. A quart bottle of Martian hooch sat atop the shelf over the instrument panel. Around it were three empty glasses. Dead drunk, all three revolutionists, some fun!

Those eyes of Tonya's came back to me again, and then I did something slightly on the low side. I found some hempwire and tied the tall, handsome revolutionist, Castro, and his two dapper, black-tuniced Martian chums until they were more securely bound than a birthday package. Then I hid the glasses and the bottle, thanking God that the Martian hooch was odorless. As a final touch, I tipped over a few things, to make it look like a struggle.

Then, feeling enormously pleased with myself, I went back to get Tonya and Wade.

"It's okay," I told them cheerfully. "You can come along now, Wade!" I added a dig: "It's safe!"

WHEN Tonya, Wade and myself got back to the pilotless, litter strewn pilot's compartment, Wade let out a gasp.

"Good Lord, Brad, you certainly fixed these chumps up proper!"

But I wasn't paying any attention to Wade and the envy that dripped from his voice. I was leaning nonchalantly over the controls of the ship, fishing for a smoke in my tunic pocket, and looking out of the corner of my eye to see how Tonya was taking this display of magnificent bravery. Her face was calm, unperturbed, and she turned to me.

"Was eet difficult, Brad?" Her voice was gentle.

"Rather," I raised a cigarette to my lips, making a show of my burned wrist, "but a few taps on their heads with the chemextinguisher fixed them up!"

Tonya nodded. "Yes, and the knock-you-out drops I put in their wheesky when they led me up here before!" Those eyes had somehow changed, and I felt like a thousand squirming snakes. Wade burst into hooting laughter. I damned myself for a thousand fools. The girl herself had left a drug in their whiskey!

"Where to, now?" Wade said at last, assuming control of things. Tonya gave him a smile that turned my soul to acid.

"We must hureeey back to Mars, Wade," she said, ignoring me. "Already they are probably tracking down my father!" She looked at the chronograph on the instrument panel of the little space ship. "But we have time!"

I still don't know why, with a ship in our hands and a chance to get back to Earth, we turned the nose of the

crate back toward the prince of screw-loose planets—Mars. The answer, of course, is Tonya, and those eyes of hers. Wade was at the controls, and I slipped in beside him. Tonya sat on the other side, next to Wade, and we gave the little ship hell, gunning it toward Mars. . . .

TIME and space slipped by in a blur, and finally we were nosing into a little spacelanding runway to which Tonya had directed us. She had removed a sheaf of papers from Castro's slumbering form just before we were making ready to moor down, and I gathered that they were the same papers for which we'd all gone through so much hell.

Wade was easing the rocket power, now, having cut the atomic motors completely, and finally we slid to a stall landing on the little runway platform. I had divested the two dapper little men and Castro of their atomic pistols, so Tonya, Wade and myself were armed as we kicked open the door of the ship and stepped down onto the landing.

"You said this was your father's hangout base?" I asked Tonya. She favored me with a cold nod. After the little trick heroics I had pulled, Wade had been getting all the warm attention. And was he lapping it up!

"You heard Tonya, Brad," my cherubic chum cut in. "She said this was the base for her father's revolutionaries. That's enough for *me!*" I could have punched him in his grinning pan at that moment. But it wouldn't have helped, especially with Tonya.

Moving over to the edge of the runway platform, I could see an array of domed structures, about twenty of them, scattered around the terra firma beneath the platform.

Tonya and Wade had moved up beside me, and the girl spoke more to him than to me when she said: "Thees is the revolutionary base. In the domed buildings down there, my father, the General, has his men ready to strike for the Cause!"

Even though I was in Tonya's doghouse, the way she said those last words was enough to make me get shivery all over—like a 1990 crate in a 50 G space dive.* I felt as though I'd willingly give my life for the Cause, whatever it was. There hadn't been a soul on the runway. Now, however, figures were clambering onto the platform from the far end and were moving toward us.

"How about Castro and those other two back in the ship?" Wade asked. "Have you got them trussed up securely?"

I gave him a look of infinite scorn. "Of course," I snapped. "I'm quite capable, if you get to know me!" I edged toward my cherubic pain-in-the-neck, fists balling for a swing.

"Boys!" Tonya's voice halted the impending brawl.

"Here come my father's men now," she said a moment later.

Little black haired Martians, clad in crimson uniform tunics came swiftly up on us. Then their leader, a bearded little man with flashing white teeth, smiled, recognizing Tonya.

"Ahh," he said with a courtly, sweeping bow. "The General's daughter!"

"Take us to my father," Tonya said imperiously. "We have an urgent message for him!"

* In interstellar space, a space-dive, so-called, even though there is no specific direction which might be called "down," takes place when a space ship descends toward a planet. A 50 G dive would be a descent made at a speed of 50 gravity attractions. Earth gravity being the standard, since the gravity attraction of each world differs. Thus, a 50 G dive would be made at the speed with which a body would fall toward a world with fifty times the gravity of Earth.—Ed.

GENERAL NORONHA didn't look at all like the father of a creature as lovely as Tonya. In fact he looked like something torn from the pages of an ancient, twentieth century cartoon strip. He seemed quite surprised, but not enormously pleased, to see us. He rose as we entered his sanctum, a fat, bald, pinheaded little man in a garishly decorated crimson tunic.

He was smoking a rank Venusian cigar, and he peered owlishly over the clouds he puffed.

"Well," he said unenthusiastically, "well."

Tonya extended the papers she had gotten from Castro. Her gesture dripped with drama.

"Here, Father," she said. "You are saved from Castro's space dogs. These men here," and she named us, me last, "were responsible for the safe delivery of these papers."

General Noronha took the papers and stuffed them carelessly in a drawer at his elbow. "Thank you," he beamed courteously at Wade and me. "I shall give you a decoration just as soon as I think of one."

Wade was still shooting for a hit with Tonya. He stepped forward.

"We don't want any decorations, General. Anything we've done to help the Cause, was done because *I* have faith in it!"

The look that Tonya gave him after that speech made me turn several shades of green. But I had noticed the General's face as Wade spoke. The old duck seemed to flinch.

"Ah, yes," he said. "The Cause."

Then he turned to Tonya. "Daughter," he said, "would you step out of the room for a moment? I have something very secret to tell these gentlemen." Tonya didn't like it, but she left, after favoring Wade with another one of those special looks.

When Tonya had gone, the General turned to Wade and me. He coughed delicately.

"My daughter has ideas," he began, "about Causes." He seemed hesitant to continue, but went on. "She is a fiery little vixen, Tonya, and likes to be in on things, so to speak. Through her mother's side of the family, she is more Martian than I am." He smiled opaquely. "Perhaps that accounts for her temperament. To keep her pleased, and, uh, er, out of my hair I let her compose a brief statement for our, er, Cause. It is very idealistic, and worked wonderfully in appealing to the Martians. They like idealistic Causes, and we had none until Tonya composed hers—for me."

"You mean," I began.

The General raised his hand, continuing. "It was also to keep her out of my, ah, er, hair, that I gave her the sheaf of papers to be delivered at the night club in which you gentlemen met her. It was unfortunate that both the members of the government forces and the members of the counter-revolutionary forces got the idea that she was carrying important papers. For as a matter of fact, they were quite valueless. I only arranged the thing to keep her out of the way. She can become so very enthusiastic, that I was afraid she would disrupt the morale of our forces. However, I was always sure that no harm would befall her." He smiled. "Nothing can happen to Tonya, for she's far too much like her mother, who, as I said before, was more Martian than I."

"Then you aren't in danger of being killed?" Wade blurted out.

"Not immediately. Castro, true enough, sent members of his counter-revolutionary group to seek me out. But they failed. For the information the papers contained was incorrect."

The General smiled. "Castro is such an enthusiastic lad, it is a pity he is so idealistic, and on the wrong side. Handsome fellow, too."

I shuddered at the thought of Castro's enthusiasm, feeling pretty damned certain that he would enthusiastically have disintegrated us sooner or later in the space ship. And then I was thinking of Tonya, and of those eyes, and that face, and figure. It was the damnedest jumble I ever encountered in all my life. But I was still willing to do and die for that Martian Miss, in spite of what her pappy had said.

WADE was looking like someone had kicked him in the stomach. Like me, he was probably thinking of the hell and highwater we'd gone through to bring these phoney papers intact to the General, all because of Tonya.

So we were standing there in a sort of terrible embarrassed silence. I was looking apologetically at Wade, and Wade was looking sheepishly at me—while the General was beginning to look a trifle bored.

At which moment, someone came barging in through the door.

He was a little Martian. His face was bloody, and his crimson tunic was smeared with dirt and tatters. He stumbled up to the General's desk, gasping for breath and sagging slightly at the knees.

"General!" he gasped. "They have come, they have found you, they, the forces of the government—" And then, smiling queerly, the little Martian pitched over on his face. I guess he was dead.

Now Tonya came dashing in through the open door. She had evidently heard everything, or heard the sound of battle which was beginning to rise outside. Her face was pale, but quite as maddeningly lovely as before. Her presence seemed to send sparks shooting all over Wade and myself. Tonya was looking at her father.

"They are outside, swarming over the grounds, the men from the government forces." Then she was looking at Wade and myself.

The General was strapping on a belt which held two atomic pistols. I still had the gun which we'd taken from Castro's trio on the space ship—and so did Wade. Then I guess all three of us were jammed up at the door at once, trying to squeeze through to get out to see the excitement.

We heard the shouting and shooting before we reached the outside, and by the time we'd left the little domed building behind us, we were in a welter of confusion and carnage. The government forces had arrived, all right. Their purple tunics were everywhere, many stretched across the ground. It looked like what had started out to be a raid had turned into a first class revolutionary battle. Someone had placed a proton cannon atop the landing platform, and was turning it down on the makeshift revolutionary headquarters. Now and again it would fire with a harsh, whining scream, and a lot more Martians would die.

I WAS trying to catch some sight of Tonya, but she'd disappeared. Wade was still beside me, as was the General, and all three of us were playing those atomic pistols for all they were worth. Every time I'd see a purple clad Martian looking in my direction, I'd pull that atomic pistol lever and the creature would fade away before my eyes. I don't think I'd had time to get the least bit fidgety about the mess. It was a battle royal and that was that.

Once or twice I was able to get in a

few honest-to-god heroics, when several Martians took turns coming up fast and unannounced on the General. I managed to pluck them off with my atomic pistol just as though they were grapes on a vine. Wade was doing quite well for himself too, thank you.

But I was the chump who climbed the landing platform and nonchalantly captured the proton cannon. I don't know what in the hell I was thinking of when I waltzed into the face of that weapon, for I might as well have been walking into the face of Death. But maybe I saw Tonya's eyes again. Anyway I did it, and turned the damned thing on the government forces.

Wheeeeeengsplat! Wheeeeeeengsplat!

I was playing that proton gun for all it was worth, and the purple clad ranks of the government forces were rapidly disappearing. This was the break the revolutionaries had needed. And now they were taking advantage of it, and mopping up in great style.

Once or twice I got a glimpse of Wade from atop the platform. He was down in the thick of things, beside the General, doing a fine bit cleaning up. But there wasn't a sight of Tonya, until I suddenly realized that she had come up and was standing beside me! I wheeled.

"Get down you little fool. This is no place for you!"

But Tonya only smiled, and there was something in her eyes which I had seen the first time I scorched my wrists up in the space ship.

"Theeese was so brave!" Tonya marveled. "Eeet is winning for the Cause!"

"Yes," I said, "the Cause." And then I shoved her, hard, so she sprawled to the platform. "Stay down there!" I bellowed, "and don't look up until I tell you it's safe." Tonya stayed there, and now and then I caught her eyes looking up at me in that marveling way. I worked that proton cannon, now, not giving a damn for anything in the world but that gal and her screwball Cause. I knew that I'd never give a damn for anything else.

And now the crimson clad revolutionaries were shouting wildly, triumphantly. The government forces had been defeated.

It was one of those damfool moments. I turned to Tonya.

"Look, kid," I said. "I love yuh. Cause or no Cause, you're wonderful." We seemed to melt together and everything was spinning like hell. When the fog cleared I knew Tonya had kissed me and that the entire revolutionary army had watched on and was now shouting its approval.

Wade didn't like the way things went. But after a while he cooled off. I guess he knew he was licked.

The General seemed very happy about his victory, and very happy about Tonya and me. He made Wade an Adjutant right on the spot, and told him there was plenty of room for promotion in his army. This had an appeasing effect on Wade, who was always a sucker for a uniform.

I did some more swift talking, and, with the aid of the General, was able to persuade Tonya that the Cause was won and that a little rest on Earth wouldn't hurt either of us. The General took me aside after that, and told me that if I could keep his daughter on Earth, he would make it well worth my while. Which was all right with me, for I wanted no more of Mars.

You see, if there's anything sane or logical about a Martian, I've never noticed it. As a race, Martians are the wildest, most hotheaded, utterly unpredictable band of zanies in the entire interplanetary chain. I ought to know. I'm married to one—

Homer Higginbottom

by MILTON KALETSKY

"HOMER! Some gentlemen are here to see you!"

Professor Homer Higginbottom looked up from the cluttered work table in his large, untidy laboratory. He looked toward the door and mumbled:

"Why can't you leave me be?" He turned his head away and suddenly whipped it back.

"Huh?" he said, bewildered. There were three men standing there beside Mrs. Higginbottom. Three long, lean gentlemen in frock coats, clutching umbrellas, their solemn faces made even longer by the carefully trimmed beards which they wore.

"Homer," said Mrs. Higginbottom, "these gentlemen are Professors. They —uh—want to see you."

Professor Higginbottom wiped away a fraction of the grease on his hands.

"Why certainly," he beamed. "Why, of course! Come right in!"

He shook hands with each in turn. Their hands were as cold and limp as mackerel.

"What are you gentlemen professors of?" he inquired.

"Psychology," said the first one shortly.

"Huh?" said Higginbottom. "All of you?"

"All of us," said the second one.

"Oh," said Higginbottom. "Psychology. Yes."

He waited a moment, then said:

"But I don't know to what I owe the honor of this visit?"

The third Professor stepped forward and explained.

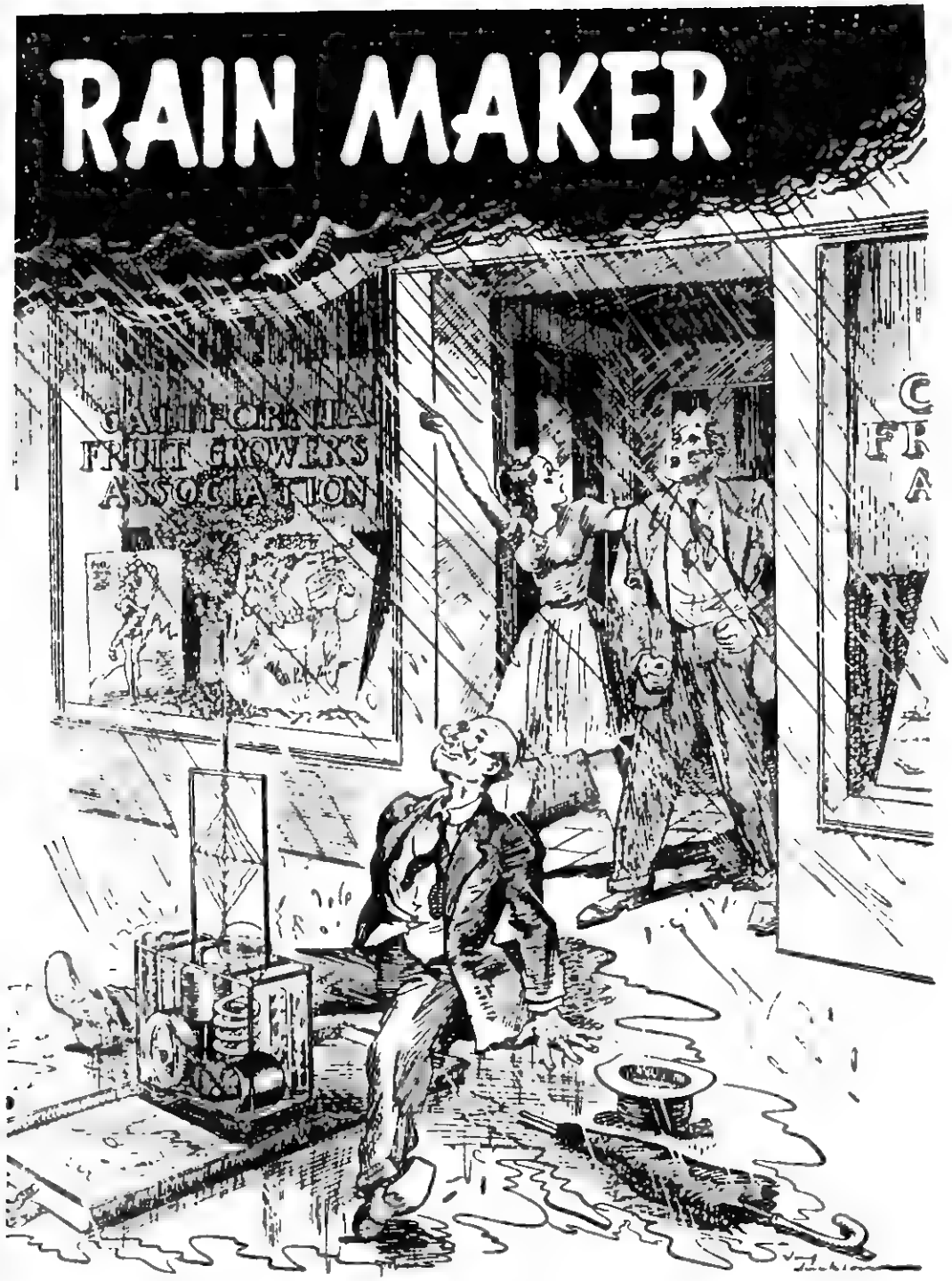
"My dear Professor Higginbottom, you are a subject of much scientific interest to us, and as a fellow scientist, we hope you will permit us to study you."

Higginbottom stepped back.

"Study me?" he cried in an injured tone. "What am I—a freak or something?"

"Not exactly," said the third. "At least, we aren't certain yet. May I introduce my colleagues, Professors Query and Gripe. I am Stefan Snook. Professor, is it true that you invented a hypnotizing machine* which happened

* Professor Homer Higginbottom's invention of the "hypnoray," referred to here by Stefan Snook, was the subject of "The Ray of Hypnosis," published in the July, 1940, issue of AMAZING STORIES. It detailed the invention of a camera-like machine which projected a hypnotic ray. Professor Higginbottom proposed to turn it over to the police department, to be used in the capture of criminals, being as easily carried as a gun, or a camera. However, unfortunately, the police were not interested, and the invention was turned down. Assailed by what he thought was a burglar in his home, Higginbottom turned the ray upon a dark figure, and rayed himself into a coma in a full-length mirror.—Ed.



"It'll be a boon to the fruit growers!" said Higginbottom enthusiastically. But they threw him out—and then it began to rain—and rain!

to hit a mirror and hypnotized you instead?"

Slowly, Higginbottom nodded his head, but his eyes were on his wife. She was gazing raptly at the floor, standing slightly behind the others.

"Ah-h-h," said Gripe and Query together.

"Is it likewise true that you were in a state of chronic hypnophobioriasis for five days?"

"I guess so," said Higginbottom. "I didn't know what happened. You see, I don't know much about psychology. I'm in the physical sciences, and that's why I don't understand what you could want here—unless . . ." He paused and looked at his wife again. "Did you send for these gentlemen, Mrs. Higginbottom?" he asked.

"Yes, Homer. You see, I thought . . ."

"If you please," Snook interrupted, "I'll go into that myself. Professor Higginbottom, is it true that when you awakened from your state of chronic hypnophobination—"

"You said hypnophobibillination last time," corrected Higginbottom.

"Please. I know very well what I said. I said hypnocorobination. Well, is it true that when you awoke you shouted, 'I've got to get back to the laboratory! I've just thought of a practical Rain-Maker!' Is it?"

A slow smile spread over the little Professor's face. His whole being seemed to come alive.

"It most certainly is!" he exclaimed. "Yes sir! In this room, half an hour from completion is mankind's greatest machine—a practical Rain-Maker, a mechanism to cause the heavens to weep with joy, to assuage the thirst of a parched earth. In short, my vision led me to make a miracle!"

"Humbug!" said Query.

"The man's a fraud!" Gripe said.

"Or," said Snook, softly. "He is *loco del coco*—which means we have come to the right place."

Higginbottom drew himself up to his full height. The smile had long since vanished from his face.

"Would you—ah—gentlemen care for a demonstration?"

Professor grinned sourly.

"Certainly. Professor Gripe, will you please take this down in your case history?"

THE three tall men followed Higginbottom across the room to a weird machine that seemed to be all gears and cranks.

"Observe closely, gentlemen. Bend forward and look at it!"

The three exchanged glances and bent closer to the machine.

"Closer, much closer," wheedled Higginbottom. "Let no detail escape you."

Three heads dropped closer, until the three beards were scarcely an inch from the wheels. Suddenly Higginbottom's fingers played on a keyboard, the machine hummed and the wheels spun. Simultaneously, three loud screams rang out. The machine stopped, spun back, releasing them.

Gasping and wiping tears from their eyes, the three tall men looked at each other's beards.

"Gone!" Query screamed. "Eight years of beard—gone!"

"You—you—" Gripe roared, shaking a bony fist. "I'll—"

"My God," groaned Snook, "what happened?"

"Forgive me, gentlemen," Higginbottom shouted. "I forgot to tell you it's a combination Rain Maker and electric razor!"

"Razor?" Gripe shrieked. "You call that a razor?"

"Certainly." Higginbottom edged

around the long table. "Why take ten minutes to shave? My machine *tears* your beard off in ten *seconds!*"

"Get me out of here—somebody—before I . . ." Query cried.

"Mayhem! Assault and battery! Robbery!" Professor Snook was standing still with his eyes closed and screaming. "Illegal! Arson! Intent to kill!"

But Gripe, his eyes wide and popping, didn't wait. He grabbed the other two and rushed them to the door.

"Hypnocranioria!" he mouthed.

Professor Higginbottom listened to them tumbling down the stairs, a stern little smile on his face as he regarded his wife, who had hidden behind the door. "Now, Mrs. Higginbottom," he said, "outside—and let a great mind work."

DURING the next few days, the neighbors of the Higginbottoms were treated to a constant stream of conversation, at all hours of the day and night. It went something like this:

"Homer, come down and *eat* something?"

"Busy!"

"Homer. Homer! Aren't you *ever* coming to sleep?""

"Not till I'm finished."

From the Man Next Door:

"Well then, shut up and let somebody else sleep!"

"Homer! Stop and eat something. You must be hungry."

"No! I don't let my stomach delay the march of science."

From the Man Next Door:

"If you don't shut up I'll march over there and *I'll stop* the march of science!"

Eventually the march of science ended and the Professor emerged from his laboratory bearing triumphantly a small iron box filled with a weird assortment of intricate electrical circuits, oscillators, vacuum tubes, condensers, coils and several of his own inventions.

"Agatha!" he beamed at his wife. "Gaze upon the highest product of the human mind!"

She was entirely unimpressed. "Looks like something off a scrap heap to me. What is it?"

"The Homer Higginbottom Ultra-Plus Rain-Making Machine."

"The Rain-Making machine?" she gurgled. "Did you really mean it when you told those psychologists you dreamed of a rain-making machine while you were hypnotized?"

"Certainly!" he snapped.

"Oh dear! Homer hadn't you better put this away and lie down?"

"Woman!" he bawled at her. "You've been married to a genius forty years and you still won't admit it!"

"Oh, all right," she said softly, to calm him. "But Homer, dear, what good is a rain-making machine?"

"What good is it?" he shrieked. "Oh ye gods and little fishes, was ever a man so misunderstood as I am?"

From the Man Next Door:

"If you don't stop yelling you'll be a misunderstood corpse!"

"What good is a rain-making machine?" he repeated. Don't you listen to the radio, Agatha? There's a terrible drought down south. No rain for five months, crops dying, millions of dollars of damage threatened."

"Not down south," she corrected. "Out west, in California."

"Florida, California, what's the difference?"

"You get mixed up in an argument between a Californian and a Floridan," she told him, "and you'll soon learn the difference."

"Never mind that, go pack my bag, Agatha," he ordered.

"Why?"

"I'm leaving for California at once.

Where's the phone? I'm flying out there today!"

Mrs. Higginbottom watched her husband swiftly dialing the airline office. "Oh dear," she sighed, "maybe I should have let him stay hypnotized."

But her husband did not hear her. He was too busy shouting at the clerk in the airline office.

"What d'you mean—I've got to wait two hours for the next plane. I'm in a hurry. I'll . . ."

CHAPTER II

Success

EIGHTEEN hours later, in the early morning, a gleaming metal airplane swooped down from eastern skies onto the Los Angeles airport. As the plane rolled to a stop, the door opened and a tall, stooped, gray haired man stalked lankily onto the ground. Spreading his arms and drawing in a deep breath, he cried out exultantly:

"California, I am here! You are saved!"

The other passengers, descending from the plane, kept away from him carefully.

"Old nut," murmured one to another, "kept me awake all night talking about a machine for making rain he'd invented. Ha ha! What a lunatic!"

"Taxi!" the Professor shouted, "The California Fruit Growers' Association.

Half an hour later, he marched through the front door and into the reception room of the Association. At the desk sat an elegant young lady, painted and curled to perfection, absorbed in the most thrilling part of a confession story. As she raised her eyes, the Professor bowed gallantly and spoke in his most majestic and impressive manner.

"Young lady, I have a rain-making machine—"

That's as far as he got. The girl took just one look at him, with his hair combed in all directions and his necktie hanging over one shoulder and with what looked like a pile of junk under his arm.

"Sorry," she snapped, "we don't want it."

The Professor stared incredulously. "Don't want it? Young lady, I'm not selling brushes. I'm offering to—"

The girl sighed and put her magazine down. Then she stood up and said wearily:

"Look, Mister. For a hundred and fifty-five days we haven't had any rain. For a hundred and twenty-five of those days we've been having a hundred screwballs, cranks and crackpots coming in here with machines for making rain. For fifty days we tried out those machines, and we didn't even get an ounce of dew out of the air. So please, Mister, take your machine I know you brought and go home."

Higginbottom bristled a n g r i l y. "Young lady, *I* am not a crank, crackpot or screwball. *I* am Homer Higginbottom!"

He paused, waiting to see the girl's jaw drop in respectful awe. But all she did was moan softly and sigh again.

"Mister, if you were Clark Gable, I'd say the same thing, just as I've been saying it a hundred times a day, a hundred and twenty-five days. That's twelve thousand, five hundred times, and if I have to say it once more, I'll go completely batty. Mister, please go home and *don't* tell me you have a machine that positively will make rain." The poor girl was almost crying.

"But I have!" the Professor insisted. "I figured it out by mathematics, and mathematics is infallible!"

The girl threw up her hands and wailed, "Mike!"

FROM an inner room a man came out. There was enough of him to make two normal men, with some left over.

"Mike, here's another."

"Jeez," said Mike, "the country's full of them. Mister, take your junk and scram."

"But—" the Professor began indignantly. Half a second later he discovered the pavements in Los Angeles were made of inflexible concrete. As he picked himself up, the Rain-Maker sailed over his head and crashed into the gutter.

"And stay out," said Mike, as he went back in.

The Professor arose, glaring at the crowd that gathered around to goggle at him.

" 'Twas ever thus," he declaimed, "genius balked by stupidity, brilliance baffled by blindness—"

A deep grumble drowned out his voice. All eyes turned upward, widening in delight and surprise. For overhead hovered a thick black cloud lit by gashes of light. Down poured a wild storm of drops, splashing and splattering on the startled crowd. For a moment, they stood bewildered, then with joyous shrieks of surprise, they danced about the street, welcoming the first rain in California in more than five months.

From every window, excited heads stuck out and howls of happiness arose.

"Rain! Rain! Rain!" they shouted gleefully to each other.

Mike and the elegant young lady appeared in a window.

"Rain!" bellowed Mike, sticking his head far out into the shower.

"Rain!" she echoed in a squeal, carefully avoiding getting her permanent wet.

Standing in the downpour, Higginbottom stared about him wonderingly for a minute, then he hastily snatched up the Rain-Maker. Delightedly he saw that the jolt when it had been thrown onto the street had started it going. He held it up and shook an angry fist at Mike and the elegant miss, meanwhile shouting above the tumult.

"Of course, you fools. And this machine made the rain! Look, I'm turning it off!"

He snapped several buttons. The faint glow of the tubes and the soft hum of the electrical circuits died. In a few seconds, the rain slowed and stopped, the clouds thinned and dissolved and the sun shone once more on a slightly dampened city.

"It really worked!" gasped Mike. His head disappeared into the office. "Hey, Mister Harrow," his voice roared, "come and look at this, quick!"

Beside the two at the window appeared a worried, weary man. Mike's gulping and spluttering could be heard down the street.

"Rain-makin' machine that really works. Hey, Mister," he howled at the Professor, "turn it on again."

With quiet dignity, the Professor replied.

"But you said you didn't want it." Turning away, he started to push through the close-packed, gaping onlookers.

Mike let out an anguished wail and disappeared from the window. In a moment he appeared in the street. Seizing Higginbottom's coat, he begged.

"Aw, Mister, don't hold that against me." He whipped out a handkerchief and vigorously brushed the dust from the Professor's trousers, meanwhile beseeching him to start the Rain-Maker again.

The man named Harrow called from the window.

"Yes, please let's see it work."

Grimly the Professor refused.

Mike gulped frantically some more,

then gasped an invitation.

"Come inside," he said, throwing the Professor inside almost as hard as he'd thrown him outside.

INSIDE the Fruit-Growers' Association's office, a horde of farmers was pressing eagerly upon the Professor.

"Have a seat," one babbled, pushing the Professor onto a chair. "Have a cigar, have a drink, have another drink, have another cigar," they burbled happily, staring at Higginbottom the way they'd stare at a million dollars, and bombarding him with questions.

"Gosh, Mister, how does it work? How much do you want for it? How much rain can it make? Have you got any more of them?"

"Wait a minute, one thing at a time," the Professor interrupted. "This is only an experimental model. It can make rain continuously, but only over a small area."

"Well, build a larger one!" they urged. "We'll supply assistants, a laboratory, money, anything you need, anything you want!"

The Professor closed his eyes to enjoy this vision. "Ah wonderful! Gentlemen, you are true friends of genius!"

"Here, here, just a moment," Mr. Harrow broke in quickly, frowning at the eager circle of fruit-growers. "Don't let your enthusiasm run away with you. Do you think money grows on trees like our oranges? Professor Higginbottom, will you please step in here? Oh, Boyd, suppose you come along too," he called to a quiet little man who hadn't yet said a word.

Ushering the Professor into a private office, Mr. Harrow said.

"Mr. Boyd is our attorney. He will write out a contract. Now, Professor Higginbottom, about terms. We will supply money for a full-size Rain-maker, that is, if it will not be too expensive, of course. And as for your salary. How much do you want?"

The Professor stroked his chin soberly.

"Hmm, let me see." Mr. Harrow and Mr. Boyd eyed him nervously, anxious to get the Rain-Maker but equally anxious to get it cheaply.

"Well, how about two—" began the Professor.

Mr. Boyd interrupted hasily. "Two thousand a week? Impossible!" He pulled Mr. Harrow down to him and whispered into his ear. Mr. Harrow nodded, and Mr. Boyd spoke again to Higginbottom. "Our top offer, Professor, is *one* thousand a week. Take it or leave it."

The Professor choked. He had been going to say two *hundred* a week, which seemed like unlimited wealth to him. But a thousand!

"Yes, surely, that's fine?" he babbled. "Where's the dotted line?"

With a shaking hand he scrawled his signature on the two papers Mr. Boyd prepared. A thousand a week! Wouldn't Agatha be proud of him when he told her that! Now she'd *have* to admit he was a genius!

CHAPTER III

Trouble

THE next few weeks were the happiest in California's history. Up and down the highways raced an automobile guarded by a company of motorcycle police, for inside that car was the small model Rain-Maker. Wherever it passed, cheering people lined the roads, for trailing behind it came a brief but heavy shower. And as reports of the condition of the fruit crop reached the California Fruit-Growers' Association offices, Mr. Harrow's gray hair started turning back to its original brown.

Once again California farmers strolled through their orchards, gloating over the grapes as large as lemons, the lemons as large as oranges and the oranges larger than Florida grapefruit, while the California grapefruit looked like basketballs.

Meanwhile, in the basement of the Association's building, the Professor was happily and busily engaged in building a full-size machine. Up to his neck in blueprints, surrounded by swarms of assistants and towering masses of machinery, he enjoyed himself tremendously, especially as Mrs. Higginbottom wasn't there to order him to eat and put on his rubbers.

One bright morning, the Professor lounged at his desk while respectful reporters surrounded him, deferentially interviewing him. Graciously and willingly the Professor took time off from his work to answer the questions they asked, for the entire country was clamoring to know more about the Higginbottom Rain-Maker.

"Is it true," one reporter asked, "that scientists from all over the country have been here to study your invention?"

"From all over the country?" repeated the Professor, sitting up with a jerk. "From all over the *world.*"

The reporters scribbled hasty notes. "What about the scientists who claim you are interfering with the proper working of natural laws and will lead the country into a disaster?"*

Higginbottom pounded an angry fist on the desk. "Bah! Frightened fools! 'Twas always thus! Every great mind has to fight stupid opposition. Well, my answer is, I shall bend the laws of nature to my will! I shall do what I like with them, and make them obey me!"

He glared around at the newshounds and added:

"I, Homer Higginbottom, have spoken!"

More scribbling by the reporters.

"Then would you say you are the greatest scientist of all time, Professor?"

Higginbottom drew himself up to his greatest height. "Gentlemen, I am a modest man. I am merely the greatest scientist of this century."

A uniformed messenger boy pushed into the room.

"Telegram for Homer Higginbottom."

"Here, boy." The Professor ripped open the envelope and absorbed the message in one glance.

"Oh dear, this is awful. Gentlemen, the Florida Fruit-Farmers Association informs me they are beginning to suffer from a drought out there, and they wish me to help them get some rain. Gentlemen, tell your readers that Homer Higginbottom never turned a deaf ear to a cry for help! The suffering people of Florida shall find a savior in Homer Higginbottom. I shall immediately stop work on the large Rain-Maker and quickly build a small one for the glorious state of Florida!"

"Not so fast, Higginbottom," a cool voice broke in. Everybody whirled. Mr. Harrow leaned against the door nonchalantly.

"Did you read your contract, Professor?" he inquired quietly.

"Only the part which tells how much money I'm supposed to get," the Pro-

*Rain usually results from the heating of air near the ground by the sun. The heated air rises and expands, because the air pressure higher up is less than on the ground. As the air expands, it cools. The cooler air is, the less water it can hold in the form of vapor; and thus the expanding air becomes so cool it can't hold the water vapor in it. The vapor separates out as clouds and finally falls as rain.

The Rain-Maker projected a ray all around that excited the air molecules and made them vibrate more rapidly. This heated them and they immediately rose, which started the rain-making cycle described above.—Ed.

fessor admitted.

Mr. Harrow snorted disgustedly. "Then listen to this: Section Nine, Paragraph B, Clause 3a, quote: The California Fruit Growers' Association shall enjoy exclusive rights in, use of, and benefits from the aforementioned Rain-Maker; and the party of the first part—that's you, Higginbottom—shall under no circumstances whatsoever permit the use of, or aid in the use of, or supply instruction in the use of any Rain-Maker based on his patents, unquote."

"Oh dear, is all that really there?" the Professor gasped.

"Yes! And if you dare send those Florida bums a Rain-Maker we'll sue you for every cent you've got!" Mr. Harrow's harsh tones left no doubt of his seriousness. He turned to the messenger.

"Boy, take a reply to that telegram: 'Sorry, cannot send any help. Contract gives exclusive rights in Rain-Maker to California.' And sign Higginbottom's name to it."

Then Mr. Harrow glared at the reporters. "Listen you guys, clear out of here and stop taking up the Professor's valuable time!"

AS soon as the office was cleared of reporters, he snapped at the Professor:

"As for you, get busy and finish that machine. We aren't paying you a thousand a week to tell reporters how smart you are!"

He marched pompously away, leaving the Professor thinking in deep gloom of that contract. If Agatha ever found out he had signed something without reading it . . . !

"California's Selfish Action!" howled a headline on the Tampa *Times-Star* that afternoon.

"California Farmers are Un-American!" squawked the Miami *Daily News.*

"Vicious Monopoly in California!" bawled an editorial in the Jacksonville *Evening Telegram.* "As if any amount of rain could produce decent fruit from those stunted half-dead trees in California. It's just that they're envious of our enormous, sweet, juicy fruit, that's all."

For days the Florida papers wailed and howled, swore and denounced, growled and grunted, but the California papers just laughed and scarcely bothered in reply. For, as even the Floridans finally acknowledged sadly, a contract is a contract.

ON ANOTHER bright morning, the Professor sat again at his desk, contentedly perusing a mass of newspaper clippings about him and his wonderful invention. His head nodded vigorously in approval as he read praise of the Rain-Maker; then his handsome face twisted in fury when he read a warning that the machine was interfering with the proper working of nature's laws. He muttered to himself, thrust the clipping away and selected another. When he'd read a few lines, his eyes opened wide and he swallowed agitatedly.

"Oh my goodness!" he moaned. And he had good reasons for moaning. The clipping read:

"Washington, Nov. 1.—Weather Bureau officials today released a report on the Higginbottom Rain-Maker, which had been in preparation for two months. Based on the verdict of a corps of expert meteorologists who went to California to study the Rain-Maker, the report announces that Higginbottom's machine hasn't made rain at all.

"The amount of rain that falls on this country, the report states, depends on the amount of evaporation from oceans, rivers, lakes and living

things. This evaporation in turn depends on the winds and on the sun, factors which Higginbottom's machine hasn't influenced at all.

"Therefore, the report concludes, all Higginbottom has done is to change the distribution of rainfall over the nation, so that California and the whole West were getting more than their proper share, while the East, especially Florida, was getting much less than its usual amount."

As the Professor sank into deep thought over this report, a storm suddenly exploded behind him and startled him into a wild jump out of his seat. When he recovered his wits, he recognized the storm as Mr. Harrow and Mr. Boyd, the lawyer, both shaken out of their usual calm for once.

"Higginbottom!" the shout rang out. "Look what you got us into!"

"Huh?" was all the bewildered Professor could think of saying.

"Come out here!" Together they pushed him into the outer office. A long line of mailmen was marching in and out, carrying in bulging mail sacks from a mail truck parked outside. In they tramped, dumped the contents of the sacks on the floor, and went out for another load.

"But . . . but . . ." gurgled the Professor in complete befuddlement.

"Summons!" howled Mr. Boyd. "Injunctions! Complaints! Claims for damages. Didn't you see the Weather Bureau report? They blame you for the drought in the East, so everybody in Florida, Georgia, South Carolina, Alabama and Mississippi is suing us for damages to their crops! There must be fifty million dollars in damages claimed against us!"

"WELL, what do you want me to do?" shouted the Professor, dancing around agitatedly and tearing his few remaining hairs with one hand while the other clutched wildly at the empty air.

The telephone rang shrilly. Mr. Harrow seized the receiver and bellowed:

"What the dickens is it?"

Then he choked and spluttered and collapsed into a chair.

"Oh, the Governor? Yes . . . yes . . . *oh*. OH . . . Ooooh!" He dropped the phone and slumped down in the chair. "Water!" he gasped.

They rushed to revive him.

"Oh woh!" he moaned. "Listen, the Governor says the State of California is being sued for sixty million dollars damages by five Eastern States! And if California has to pay any damages, *he'll* sue *us* for the money!"

A sudden happy thought hit the Professor and he shouted:

"Wait! Our troubles are over! All we have to do is to lend them the Rain-Maker to end the drought there, and they'll drop their lawsuits against us!"

The two Californians glared furiously at him. Mr. Boyd spoke with icy scorn.

"You dare to suggest we should yield to those Florida bums? Never! We'll fight! We'll say your machine is a failure, that you're a faker who defrauded us and fooled us into believing your machine makes rain."

The scream that burst from Higginbottom then could almost be heard back home in New York.

"What! You want me to say my great invention is a fake? *Never!"*

Both his lean hands were now occupied in tearing hair from his unhappy head. But Mr. Harrow had no sympathy. From his pocket he drew a copy of the contract.

"Listen to this, Higginbottom," he remarked, his voice ominously calm and hard. "Section Fourteen, Paragraph E, Clause 2b, quote: if the California Fruit-Growers' Association or any mem-

ber thereof shall suffer any damage, loss and/or expense directly or indirectly because of the aforementioned Rain-Maker, the party of the first part —that's *you*, Higginbottom—shall be liable *in full* for such damage, loss, and/or expense. Unquote."

"In other words," Mr. Boyd grated at the unlucky Professor, "if we have to pay any damages to anybody, we'll collect every cent of it from *you!*"

The Professor had nothing to say to that. Clapping both hands to his gray head which was now rapidly turning white, he slumped to the floor, completely speechless. What would Agatha say if she knew about *this!*

CHAPTER IV

The Trial

BECAUSE it would have taken all the federal courts in the country about a hundred and eighty years to handle so many lawsuits, it was decided to settle the matter with just one trial: the State of Florida, plaintiff, versus the State of California, defendant. And as one state was suing another, the trial had to be held before the Supreme Court in Washington, D. C.

The Court's first action, before the trial, was to impound the small Rain-Maker and the full-size one, which had just been completed, and place them under guard in a warehouse in Washington.

The day the trial opened, a cavalcade of automobiles swept in from the west, bearing Higginbottom, Harrow, Boyd, and the rest of the California legal staff. Straight to the Supreme Court building they drove, through streets thronged with Californians, Texans, Arizonans, Floridans, Georgians, Alabamans and others from the deep South and far West who had come to see that justice—or rather, what they thought was justice—was done.

Here and there the cavalcade was delayed by crowds jammed around an angry speaker, denouncing Florida or California. On other corners, the speeches were turning into small riots as infuriated Southerners clashed with taunting Westerners. For days the city had been filled with fights and riots, and the local jails were bulging with excitable Californians and Floridans.

Nearing the Court, the party in the automobiles was recognized and a shower of bricks and over-ripe fruit descended upon them. "Kill them bums!" someone shouted, tossing a rock. A second later, a Californian clouted him with a bat, starting a new riot.

Not too calmly, the Professor and his companions dashed up the long entrance to the Court and scurried to safety inside. The halls were thronged with spectators, muttering and growling, prevented from battling each other only by the large companies of uniformed guards lined along the walls.

The Californians entered the great chamber where the trial was about to begin. The spectators sitting there were one big bad temper, and worst temper of all was the Professor's, for if necessary he would have to get up and publicly announce his invention was a failure.

Suddenly everybody stood up. The nine justices, solemn and dignified in their black robes, were filing in, led by the stately Chief Justice. As they sat down, the spectators followed suit, murmuring noisily.

The court clerk arose.

"Oyez oyez oyez," he intoned. "This Court is now in session. The sovereign State of Florida, plaintiff, versus the sovereign State of California, defendant."

AT a nod from the Chief Justice, up rose the head of the Floridan legal staff, the famed Harold Wallace. Pompously he advanced toward the high bench, bowed to the Chief Justice in the center, bowed to the eight other justices in turn, swept his hand across his towering brow in a thoughtful gesture and cleared his throat.

"Your Honors, ladies and gentlemen of the bar, and honorable witnesses. This case is more than a mere dispute between two states. It is a matter upon which rests the fate of a nation, *our* nation, gentlemen, our own country! Shall a mad scientist be allowed to interfere with the proper working of natural laws—"

"Objection!" interrupted California's chief attorney, Mr. Boyd.

"You object to what?" asked the Chief Justice.

"My honorable opponent's last remarks are incompetent, immaterial and irrelevant. Moreover, he is attempting to create a prejudice against Professor Higginbottom."

A burst of applause from the Californians and boos from the Floridans swept the room. While the Chief Justice pounded his gavel for silence, Mr. Harrow tugged at Mr. Boyd's coat and whispered hastily.

"Maybe we'd better let him say that after all. Let the judges think Higginbottom is a dope."

"What!" gurgled the Professor, turning red.

"Your Honors," said Mr. Boyd, "I withdraw the objection."

"But I don't!" the Professor protested, leaping to his feet. "Nobody's going to call me a mad scientist and get away with it."

The Chief Justice pointed a warning finger at Higginbottom while the other justices smiled faintly.

"The witness will refrain from making remarks until he is called upon to testify."

A chorus of hoots and cheers greeted these words. Banging for quiet, and flushing angrily, the Chief Justice warned he would clear the court if there were another disturbance.

"Proceed, Mr. Wallace," he said to the plaintiff's lawyer.

The Floridan turned to face the bench again and resumed his harangue.

"Interference with natural laws . . . causing drought in Florida . . . might destroy farms over entire nation . . . taking bread from children's mouths . . . poor widows and orphans starving . . . California's selfishness . . . great invention ought to be used by everybody . . . etc. . . . etc. . . . etc."

Before he was done, the Floridans present were sobbing audibly. Even two of the justices wiped their eyes.

Mr. Harrow squirmed nervously and whispered anxiously to his lawyer.

"Don't worry," Mr. Boyd assured him, "When *I* get up to open our case, I'll convince the Court that California is populated by angels."

"With the Court's permission, I will call my first witness," said Mr. Wallace. "Mr. John T. Ferrel, principal meteorologist of the United States Weather Bureau."

A SLENDER studious man walked lightly forward. The court clerk approached him.

"Raise your right hand. Doyousolemnlysweartotellthetruththewholetruth andnothingbutthetruth,swelpyougod?" he mumbled.

"I do."

Counsel for the plaintiff leaned on the witness stand, smiling pleasantly.

"Now, Mr. Ferrel, tell the Court what the Weather Bureau thinks of the Higginbottom Rain-Maker and of the awful, tragic, horrible things it has done

to the weather in Florida."

"Well, it seems that wherever the Rain-Maker has been used in California, heavy showers followed."

Smiles started across the faces of the attentive Floridans.

The witness continued. "And the drought in Florida began exactly when the drought in California ended, which was when Higginbottom's machine began to be used."

The Floridans' smiles grew broader, while the Californians looked glum.

"That's all, Mr. Ferrel," said Mr. Wallace, grinning satisfiedly. "That's what we wanted the Court to hear."

"Just a moment." Mr. Boyd was advancing. "I wish to ask a few questions of this witness: Mr. Ferrell, as a weather expert, are you completely sure that the Rain-Maker is causing the heavy rain in California and the drought in Florida?"

The witness hesitated.

"Well, the science of weather is far from perfect, and we're never completely sure of anything."

"Aha!" Mr. Boyd looked up at the justices significantly. Turning back to the witness, he barked:

"Do you really think such a tiny, feeble machine as the small Rain-Maker could have such a large effect on the weather in such a huge country as ours?"

Mr. Ferrel spoke more confidently now.

"In my own personal opinion, the Rain-Maker is *not* responsible for the abnormalities of the weather at all. The drought in Florida may be a purely natural event."

The smiles jumped off the Floridans' faces onto the Californians'.

Mr. Wallace was on his feet shouting hasty objections, but the Court would not recognize him and Mr. Boyd hurried on.

"Then there is a reasonable doubt about whether the Rain-Maker is responsible for the drought?" he fired.

Mr. Ferrel replied firmly.

"Yes."

"That's all, Mr. Ferrel," chuckled Mr. Boyd.

At the table around which the legal talent for California was clustered, Mr. Harrow and the Professor grinned at one another. Their case was won right there. For if the Weather Bureau experts weren't absolutely sure the Rain-Maker was causing the drought, then Florida could not collect damages.

For only a moment were the Floridans stumped. Then, after a hasty conference, they fired off their heaviest artillery and changed the state of affairs around completely.

"Your Honors!" Mr. Wallace advanced before the row of justices. "Let us have the most expert testimony possible. Let us test out the full-size Rain-Maker itself before the entire Court!"

When the Californians recovered from this shock, consternation reigned among them. Mr. Boyd gaped in the greatest dismay, then leaped up, squawking incoherent, futile objections. But the nine justices considered the suggestion excellent and nodded approval.

Turning to Mr. Ferrell, the Chief Justice asked:

"What kind of weather will we have tomorrow?"

The expert's heavy brows came together in deep concentration. Rubbing his lean chin, he gave his opinion.

"At this season of the year, there's never much rain. Because of the drought, there won't be rain for weeks. Tomorrow will be clear and dry."

"Fine," said the Chief Justice. Rising, he announced, "This Court is adjourned until ten o'clock tomorrow morning and will reconvene in the

warehouse where the Rain-Maker has been impounded."

CHAPTER V

Rain!

THAT evening, in the hotel where California had its headquarters, the gloom was so thick you could have cut it into bricks. In one second, their joy at the weather expert's testimony had vanished, and the future looked blacker than the inside of a coal mine at midnight.

For as soon as the full-scale Rain-Maker was tried out, there would be no doubt about what caused the drought in Florida, in spite of what the Weather Bureau said. By noon the next day, they'd be owing Florida more money than they could count.

Professor Higginbottom lounged in his room unable to decide whether to be glad his invention would be proved successful or whether to worry about the fifty million dollars in damages he would have to pay. He finally decided not to worry about paying, for even if he sold everything he owned, he couldn't raise more than about five thousand dollars. But when he thought of what Agatha would say. . .

A ripping, tearing sound overhead brought him leaping to the window. In amazement, he stared at the sky. Where brilliant stars had twinkled in a clear black void a minute before, thick black clouds were swiftly gathering and growing now, while through them cut great knives of lightning. Down cascaded such torrents as Washington had never seen.

The rumble of thunder rose louder and louder, crashing, booming, reverberating, its incessant explosions completely submerging the cries of surprise from the crowds in the street, who scattered seeking shelter.

"What a storm," murmured the Professor casually. He yawned and stretched. "Guess I'd better get some sleep," he muttered to himself. "Probably a hard day ahead tomorrow."

Soon his long lean form was sprawled motionless on the bed. But sleep, though earnestly wooed, did not come. Probably it was scared away by the bombarding of the heavenly artillery overhead.

Few people got any sleep that night in Washington, nor anywhere in the East, West, North or South. Out over the land the storm spread, bringing hurricane winds, tornadoes, raging sheets of rain, accompanied by incessant lightning and thunder.

When the nine justices arose next morning, after a sleepless night, it was clear there would be no court that day, unless they swam or rowed to the courthouse. The streets were under two feet of water that raced along like a river in flood, whipped to foam by screaming winds. Anyone who ventured out soon came staggering back, battered and bruised by being knocked down by lashing gales.

The Professor stared incredulously out his window. Never before had the elements raged and fought so wildly in the skies.

A knock on his door sounded faintly through the crashing thunder.

"Come in!"

Mr. Boyd and Mr. Harrow, clad in dressing gowns, stamped in. "Higginbottom, a call just came from the court clerk that the case has been held over until this storm stops. Nobody can go out in this weather. Whew! What a storm!"

"Say," said Mr. Harrow, suddenly thoughtful, "you don't suppose the big Rain-Maker got going somehow, do you, Professor?"

"Impossible. It's locked up under guard."

"But such a storm! Could the Rain-Maker kick up such a hurricane?"

The Professor shook his head.

"I didn't have a chance to test it. I don't know its powers yet."

Mr. Harrow snapped on the radio and wiggled the dial till he got a news report.

"Golly, listen to that," he exclaimed.

Through the crackling of static came a voice:

"—already under four feet of water, while at Dayton, the entire city has been evacuated due to the flood. And here's a bulletin from Wisconsin. Lightning struck and destroyed more than a hundred houses during the night in the town of Wausau."

The three men stared at one another, then at the radio which was calmly announcing more disasters.

"California: The Fruit-Growers' Association at Los Angeles announced early this morning that the orchards throughout California have been so badly soaked and water-logged that the fruit has begun to rot on the trees."

MR. HARROW dropped moaning onto the bed. Even the next bulletin didn't cheer him up.

"Florida: Heavy rain and high winds have loosened the dried-out soil in many communities and is washing it away in the flooded rivers. Hundreds of farms are in danger of complete ruin by the storm."

Groaning in concert, the three went down to the dining room. None of them felt like eating, but there wasn't anything else to do as long as they were marooned in the hotel. And so the day passed in worried conferences, munching, and listening to the mounting tale of catastrophes reported over the air.

Rivers flooding half the Midwest; bridges washed out; dams bursting; farms and crops washed away by racing streams. From coast to coast, most of North America was one great mud puddle, with business and manufacturing at a standstill. People couldn't go out, nothing could be moved. With roads, tracks and bridges smashed, trains, trucks and buses were all standing idle and deserted.

Night fell. The only way the people in the hotel could tell it was night was by the clock, for during the entire day it had been almost pitch black outside. Twenty-four hours of continuous storm were drawing to a close when through the whistling, crackling static the radio brought a bulletin from the Weather Bureau. After an entire day devoted to frantic study of weather reports from observing stations all over the country, the Bureau had to admit the storm was a complete mystery. How it began was unknown. When it would end was equally unknown. All that could be said was that the storm seemed to have started somewhere near Washington, D. C., and from there it spread in all directions.

In Higginbottom's room, three men swallowed their Adam's Apples when they heard that.

"Higginbottom!" wailed Mr. Harrow. "It must be the Rain-Maker. It must have gone wrong somehow."

The Professor opened his mouth to utter indignant denials, when loud thumps on the door were heard.

"Come in," he called.

The door opened. When Boyd, Harrow and the Professor saw who stood there, they coughed their Adam's Applies right up again.

"Wallace! And all you Florida guys. What the dickens do you want?" roared Mr. Boyd.

His clothes dripping a torrent, the

Florida lawyer stared downward abjectly.

"Uh, could we see the Professor alone, please?"

"What is it?" the Professor demanded.

Wallace drew him out into the hall with a wet hand and whispered in his ear. As the Professor listened, his eyes opened, blinked rapidly, bulged, and finally rolled agitatedly. "Oh! oh my! Oh my goodness gracious!" he moaned. "We've got to go there right away. Come on."

THE Professor dashed downstairs, leading the Floridans and the puzzled Californians who trailed behind. While the lobby loungers stared incredulously, they all hurried out without coats or hats and disappeared in the storm.

Buffeted and tossed about, they staggered in a miserable group along the street, while the Professor revealed between gasps for breath where they were going.

"Last night, Wallace sent a guy to sneak into the warehouse and start the Rain-Maker going. When the storm started, the man tried to shut the machine off, but the control levers stuck. So he tried to pull some wires loose to break the electrical circuits and got shocked unconscious. He recovered only a few hours ago, and came back to Wallace as soon as he could. Wallace tried to get someone else to go shut the Rain-Maker off but everybody's afraid of it. They didn't dare tell anyone because anybody who got caught around the Rain-Maker would be jailed by the Supreme Court for breaking its impounding order. So they had to come and tell me."

"Hey, Wallace," called Mr. Boyd. "What was the big idea anyway?"

"We wanted to know in advance whether the Rain-Maker really worked. If it did, we'd win the suit. But if it didn't we'd lose the suit and have to pay all your expenses in this trial. So I thought I'd better have somebody test it out during the night, and if it didn't work, we'd at once withdraw our lawsuit against you, so we wouldn't have to pay your expenses."

"Well of all the dirty—" begun Mr. Boyd. But a gust of wind spun him into a puddle and he swore at the rain, instead of at Mr. Wallace.

Five minutes later, they slipped into a dark alley behind a huge building on the edge of the city, crawled up a fire-escape and in through a window which had been expertly unlocked the night before.

Pausing to blow gallons of water from their lungs, they glanced around in the darkness. Somebody lit a flashlight, revealing a cavernous room, empty except for the Rain-Maker.

Gleamingly new, ready for action, it stood mounted on wheels, with rows of power tubes, oscillators, huge coils and condensers piled almost to the ceiling. On one side, a set of generators, transformers and other electrical devices were clustered. Through it all ran a maze of wires and cables. A gentle hum and a faint light came from the tubes. The whole room throbbed with the enormous power being poured into the air.

The Professor broke the silence.

"You shouldn't have turned it full on," he exclaimed softly, hurrying to the Rain-Maker. "We didn't know its powers. It hadn't been tested. What a stupid thing you did."

He tugged vigorously at the control levers. When they refused to move, he darted around to the back of the machine and carefully disconnected some wires by kicking at them. The low hum died away, the glowing tubes

darkened, the Rain-Maker stopped sending out its potent ray.

Tensely they stood, listening to the tumult outside. In a minute, the rumble of thunder grew fainter, the lightning ceased, the clouds rapidly thinned, and an astonished moon looked down on a half-drowned, water-soaked land.

HEAVING deep sighs of relief, they splashed through the pool that had dripped from them and crawled one by one out the window and down the fire-escape. As they emerged from the alley, Mr. Boyd stopped them.

"See here, Wallace. Even though the Rain-Maker works beautifully, you've got to withdraw your suit against California now."

"Eh? Why?" the Floridan demanded.

"Because you've done a lot more damage to us and to the entire country than we did to you. If we let out that *you* caused this storm by medding with the Rain-Maker against the Court's order, everybody in the whole country will sue *you* for the damage it did."

The Floridans paled and stared at each other in dismay. Boyd was right. They had to keep quiet and forget the whole thing, even though their orchards were ruined. Bursting with rage, they plodded along the muddy streets.

Only the Professor was happy.

"Now that I know the Rain-Maker can produce rain all over the country at the same time," he announced gaily, "I'll turn it on every day for ten minutes and the entire country will have a little shower. Every day, same time, same amount. No more drought to worry farmers anywhere. Wonderful! The greatest invention ever!"

"Wait a minute, Higginbottom," Mr. Boyd said, shaking his head warningly. "If you do that people will guess that the Rain-Maker caused this big storm and they'll sue *you* also. You'd better sell the Rain-Maker for junk and forget about it, if you don't want to be held responsible for all this damage."

"You mean you won't use the Rain-Maker any more in California?" demanded the Professor.

Mr. Boyd and Mr. Harrow nodded.

"All right, I don't care about that, but how about my salary?" the Professor continued.

"No Rain-Maker, no salary," said Mr. Boyd firmly.

The Professor fished around in a pocked and dragged out a sheet of paper.

"Oh yeah?" he snapped. "Then listen to this, Boyd. Contract, Section Twenty-One, Paragraph A, Clause 7, quote: The above-specified salary shall be paid each and every week, whether or not the Rain-Maker is used during that week. Unquote."

He shook the paper under Mr. Boyd's nose.

"Is all that really there?" gasped Mr. Harrow. "Boyd, you fool, why'd you ever put that in? Now we've got to buy that contract. How much do you want, Higginbottom?"

The Professor thought fast.

"Twenty-five thousand cash."

"Impossible! Ten thousand is the most we'll pay!" said Harrow flatly.

"I'll settle for twenty thousand!" conceded the Professor.

"No! Not a penny more than twelve thousand."

"Eighteen thousand?"

"Fourteen thousand is all we'll offer."

"Sixteen thousand?"

"All right!" Harrow shouted. "Sixteen thousand! Here's my personal check." He scrawled a check and handed it to the Professor in exchange for his copy of the contract. The Professor looked at the check lovingly. Wouldn't Agatha be proud of him when

she saw that!

Greatly pleased with himself, Higginbottom smiled around at them. Only dark, gloomy scowls were returned.

"Dear me, why so angry, gentlemen?" he inquired mildly.

Mr. Wallace pushed a distorted face up against the Professor's.

"Why shouldn't we be angry? Aren't our orchards ruined because of your crazy machine? Isn't our crop destroyed because you interfered with nature?"

Mr. Harrow joined the attack, shaking the Professor's contract in the air furiously. "Weren't *our* orchards also wrecked by your lunatic invention. And didn't *we* have to pay sixteen thousand dollars for a scrap of paper?"

The Professor's face lighted.

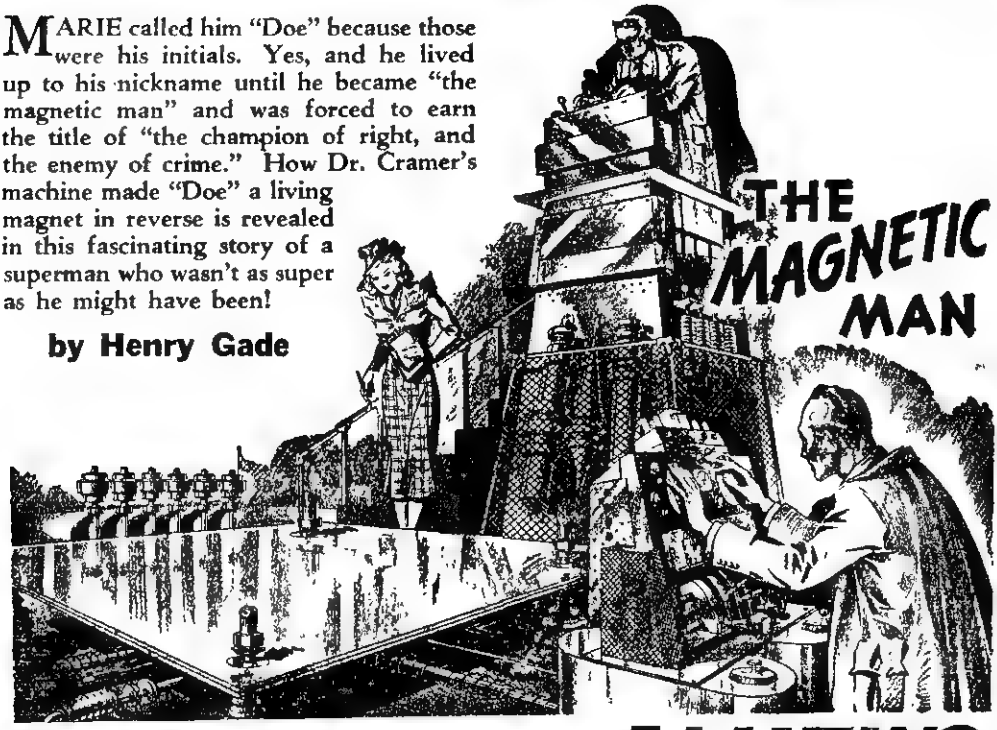
"Gentlemen, relax, and be calm," he beamed at them. "I have just what you need. At home, in New York, I have a little machine that gives off a ray that makes people happy and gay. Would you like to try— Why, where are you all going? Hey, don't run away. Hey!"

But the Floridans and Californians had had enough of Homer Higginbottom's inventions. They were getting as far away from him as they could, and the fastest they knew how. And they wouldn't stop till they were safely back home.

Can you blame them?

MARIE called him "Doe" because those were his initials. Yes, and he lived up to his nickname until he became "the magnetic man" and was forced to earn the title of "the champion of right, and the enemy of crime." How Dr. Cramer's machine made "Doe" a living magnet in reverse is revealed in this fascinating story of a superman who wasn't as super as he might have been!

by Henry Gade



And there are 5 other GREAT STORIES you'll want to read next month by these famous authors: William P. McGivern ★ David Wright O'Brien ★ Robert Moore Williams ★ James Norman ★ Leigh Brackett

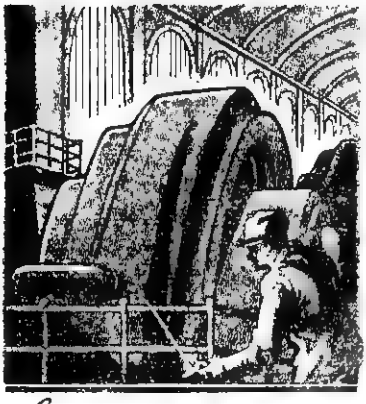
BIG JULY ISSUE ON SALE MAY 10

AMAZING STORIES

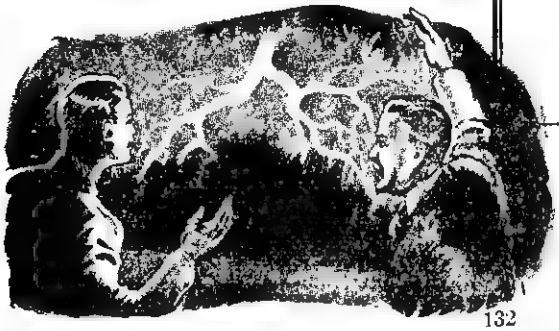
Scientific

ONE DAY IN **ALTAMONT, SOUTH DAKOTA**, A ROAD GANG WAS STUNNED BY A **LIGHTNING FLASH** THAT CAME OUT OF A CLEAR SKY. WHAT MYSTERIOUS PHENOMENON CAUSED THIS AMAZING **ELECTRICAL DISTURBANCE**?

Benjamin Franklin, IN 1752, HUNG A KEY ON A KITE STRING, AND **PROVED** THAT **LIGHTNING** WAS REALLY **ELECTRICITY**.



THE ENTIRE **POWER SYSTEM** OF THE CITY OF NEW YORK CANNOT EQUAL THE **CURRENT** GENERATED BY THE AVERAGE **THUNDERSTORM**. WHERE DOES THIS **TREMENDOUS ENERGY** COME FROM?



DOES THE **ANSWER** TO THE MYSTERY OF LIFE LIE IN THE **SECRETS** HIDDEN BEHIND THE **LIGHTNING'S FLASH**?

Mysteries

BY JOSEPH J. MILLARD

The mystery of the lightning has never been satisfactorily explained. What is the cause of this phenomenon? What connection, if any, has it with the mystery of Life on Earth?

A FEW years ago, near the tiny village of Altamont, South Dakota, a gang of men was engaged in grading a section of country road. It was a boiling hot midsummer day, with the sun directly overhead in an absolutely cloudless sky.

Suddenly, without any warning, there was a single flash of brilliant light that completely blinded the workmen Simultaneously there was a thunderous crash so terrible that the men were flung to the parched prairie where they lay stunned for several minutes. When they recovered sufficiently to investigate, they could find not a single trace of either a cause or affect of the phenomena.

While no one may ever know for sure, it is probable that these workmen were the victims of one of the less common and utterly weird examples of "Jove's Thunderbolts" that appear from time to time There have been sufficient verified cases to force science to accept the fact that lightning can and does sometimes strike out of a clear sky. But that is only one of the fantastic and incomprehensible feats performed by lightning.

It was nearly two hundred years ago, in 1752, that Benjamin Franklin hung a key on a kite cord and proved thereby that lightning was a form of electricity. But to this day, science cannot tell for certain where that electricity comes from or how it is generated by nature. And that is despite the fact that science has trapped, harnessed, measured, disarmed and even created lightning in its laboratories.

One theory, advanced by Sir G. C. Simpson of England, is that the breaking up of raindrops by currents of ascending air builds up an electrical charge. Another, sponsored by Professor Wilson of Cambridge University, suggests that the raindrops gather charges as they fall through natural electrical fields. Still other theories blame the sun or the friction of air on dust particles or the flow of magnetic currents through the earth.

The odd thing is that all these theories can be at least partially proven by laboratory tests which actually create miniature lightning by the method suggested. Yet none of them explain *all* the mysteries of lightning.

RARE PHENOMENA

BESIDES numerous instances of lightning striking from a cloudless sky, there are authenticated examples of lightning in clouds of the cumulus type where there are no raindrop formations at all. Stranger still was a storm witnessed in 1927 where for six hours there was a lightning display of incredible brilliance without either a drop of rain or a single mutter of thunder. How lightning bolts could rupture the air for distances ranging as high as ten miles without the characteristic sound we know as thunder is something science cannot explain. As well expect a battery of ordinary heavy artillery guns to bombard for six hours without making a sound audible to human ears.

On rare occasions, observers have seen another freak of lightning that defies explanation. That is the phenomena commonly called "pearl-necklace" lightning. In this type, the lightning flash itself appears and vanishes but afterward a string of brightly-glowing points hang in the air along the path of the bolt, often remaining visible for several seconds. What these lights are or how they are created is still a dark mystery to researchers.

Another mystery diverges into the realm of sound. Besides the audible thunder, a lightning flash produces sound waves too long to be detected by the human ear but which are capable of jarring windows and shaking buildings. There is, however, still a third and totally mysterious audible result often noticed by researchers but never explained.

At the moment of the lightning flash, watchers sometimes hear a sharp, metallic click that comes even ahead of the thunder. What this is or what causes it, nobody knows or has advanced even an acceptable theory although its mystery has been

probed by many skilled scientists.

Today, man can produce a feeble imitation of lightning to aid him in his studies, but before the mysterious might of nature, he still must hang his head in shame. To produce a lightning flash five yards long, one laboratory recently used a building full of costly special equipment that included giant transformers wound with a hundred miles of wire and grounded in tanks containing forty thousand gallons of oil.

All this equipment produced lightning bolts five yards long. Yet in a single six-hour storm over London in 1923, Nature produced more than six thousand lightning bolts that ranged in length from a few hundred yards to as great as ten miles. Even an average thunderstorm generates nearly ten times the current generated by power stations serving an entire city like New York.

BALL LIGHTNING

BUT by far the weirdest and least understood lightning phenomena of all are those known as ball or globe lightning. These are actual balls of fire, some no larger than a golf ball and others as large as basket balls, that appear out of nowhere during some thunderstorms, especially in winter. These fire-balls sometimes hover for a moment and then vanish without making a sound. But on numerous occasions they have been known to explode violently, noisily and destructively. What ball lightning consists of, how it is formed or what makes it behave as weirdly as it does defies all attempts at rational explanation.

Sometimes such balls appear with startling suddenness, either floating in midair or resting on some good conductor of electricity. They seem to have a special and annoying attribute of appearing in or oozing into closed rooms inside houses. At times they fall down out of the clouds during a storm and roll around on the ground before blowing up or disappearing.

Some lightning balls, usually the floating type, are a bright flame red in color. Others, particularly those that follow wires and other conductors, are a sharp white in color and intensely hot. At times such fire-balls have invaded houses and rolled around, scorching furniture and even severely burning occupants of the room.

The red balls are more spectacular. During a church service in Yorkshire, England, a few years ago, one rolled up the aisle to the front and burst, leaving a strong odor of sulphur that must have convinced the congregation that the devil himself had come calling. History records that once when St Martin, the Bishop of Tours, was saying a mass, a ball of red fire appeared in the air above his head and then rose toward heaven.

Ordinarily, ball lightning vanishes or explodes within a few seconds but some time ago, observers in New Zealand watched a fire-ball poised on a finger of cloud in the sky for fifteen minutes. The British Consul in Hamburg watched for some time while a purplish ball of lightning hovered over the steeple of a church.

Probably there is a very close relation between fire-balls or ball-lightning and the cold purple flame known as St. Elmo's Fire which is as likely to appear on human beings as on inanimate objects. However, St. Elmo's Fire has never been known to burn, explode or show other destructive tendencies, although it frequently appears during thunderstorms, especially after a particularly sharp lightning flash.

Sailors are all familiar with St. Elmo's Fire as the purplish brush of cold flame that seems to spurt from mast-heads and other jutting points of the ship, but the phenomena is by no means confined to the sea. Travelers in mountainous regions like the Alps are often amazed to see their own bodies engulfed in the weird flame or to see bluish fires leaping from their hands and heads. Airplane pilots notice discharges of St. Elmo's Fire during storms and explorers in Antarctic Regions mention the phenomena as very strong.

Naturally, all sorts of superstitions and terrors have grown up around the weird appearance of the unnatural flames. And it is probably also true that many other phenomena that deserve deeper study are lightly passed off as being nothing but strange manifestations of St. Elmo's Fire.

WEIRD LEGENDS

FOR more than a hundred years, sailors in the Gulf of St Lawrence have whispered strange tales of the burning phantom ship of Baie des Chaleurs that is frequently seen between Caraquet and Paspebiac. This appears as a bluish flame rising from the sea, sometimes very small and at other times large enough to be a good-sized ship in flames. More than one sailor or fisherman, grown bold, has tried to approach this weird apparition but none has ever succeeded. As a boat draws near, the flame is mysteriously extinguished. As the disappointed investigator draws away, the flame reappears. Science says this is merely St. Elmo's Fire in another of its baffling manifestations.

The explanation St Elmo's Fire has also been given to another phenomenon that has baffled those who see it This is the phenomenon known as the "Andes Lights." Very often, particularly during the summer, the peaks of the Andes Mountains in South America are lit up by a weird and brilliant glow that illuminates their summits. Frequently this glow is accompanied by piercing shafts of light that arise from the forbidding mountain peaks to tremendous heights that make them visible for many miles at sea

Science says that St. Elmo's Fire is merely the visible evidence of a constant back-and-forth flow of electricity that is taking place at all times between earth and atmosphere. Ordinarily, they say, this discharge is invisible but when the presence of abnormal conditions like approaching storms or an abundance of foreign matter in the air creates an increase in the electrical tension be-

tween the two poles, the discharge becomes faintly visible.

But this theory, like the theories concerning lightning, fails to stand up before all the weird phenomena classed under the heading of St. Elmo's Fire. The Aurora Borealis, for one example, is a similar type of luminous phenomenon that fails to fit the theories advanced for this type of spectacle. It would seem that lightning, ball lightning, St. Elmo's Fire and the Aurora have something in common, yet they all display unpleasant characteristics of their own that make general theories untenable.

Still other weird and unexplained forms of unnatural light may or may not be part of these other phenomena just mentioned. One of these is the appearance of rich purple light in the sky at times, shortly after sundown. Another is the weird and unexplained "Zodiacal Light" that appears as strips of luminous haze in the night sky. Still another which may bear some relation is that class of glistening silvery clouds sometimes seen in summer and which are always exactly fifty miles high—too high to be normal clouds formed in the normal manner.

ALL BASICALLY RELATED?

IT may seem a far cry from lightning balls to silvery clouds, but there is some evidence that a mysterious and little-known basic energy may lie behind them both From the time of Benjamin Franklin, electricity has been considered that basic energy. At first glance, this seems the obvious interpretation.

But it is significant that every breakdown of the scientific theories advanced to explain lightning, fire-balls, St. Elmo's Fire, the Aurora and these related phenomena lies in the efforts of science to fit electricity into the picture as that basic energy.

True, these phenomena may be duplicated in the laboratories by using electricity. In many cases, they may even be detected or measured or affected by the same things that affect electrical phenomena. Yet they might not be electricity, as we know it, at all.

Carbon dioxide can be poured like a liquid It can be used to extinguish flame. Under pressure, it can be made to turn a small water wheel or affect gauges and meters designed to record the actions of liquid. From those facts, we might assume that carbon dioxide is a liquid Yet we know that it is a gas, in spite of its apparent attributes of a liquid.

In exactly the same way, perhaps the mysterious energy that can lash from the heavens with devastating fury, or fall as a fiery ball or glow harmlessly from a bare fingertip may have the power to affect instruments designed to record electrical energy—and not be electricity at all. Perhaps we are face to face with some unexplored, unfamiliar but infinitely potent natural force more flexible and more useful than even electricity that is waiting only to be identified and harnessed.

If that is true, the key to its vast potentialities lies in the thunderbolt and the lightning ball and the other weird lights and lightnings about which, as yet, we know practically nothing. But it is a field where the amateur may take his place beside the trained researcher to make a lasting contribution to science. Meteorologists and scientists seek and welcome reports of such matters from anyone willing to observe and write his findings.

Who knows but what some amateur, watching the unrivaled magnificence of a thunderstorm, may suddenly see the answer to one of the greatest mysteries of the universe and give to science a whole new conception of the basic foundations of life itself?

« STRANGE, BUT TRUE »

COINCIDENCE, as an explanation for mysterious phenomena, has been worn thin through over-use. As a rule, when we ascribe a remarkable occurrence to "coincidence" it is merely a face-saving way of saying "incomprehensible." One of these incomprehensible coincidences occurred a hundred years ago in the realm of classical music and, to this day, it remains inexplicable.

Johann Sebastian Bach, the immortal German composer, wrote the greatest music the world has ever known. Due to its very volume, however much of it remained unpublished after his death, in 1750.

A century later the illustrious French composer, Charles Gounod, published a hauntingly beautiful *Ave Maria.* However, Gounod was not satisfied with his composition and believed that there was some indefinable essence lacking in the work.

One of his friends discovered about this time a previously unpublished Bach Ave Maria. As an experiment he combined the Bach version with that of Gounod—*with astounding results.* For the two pieces fused together to form one majestic composition of inspiring beauty and feeling.

Note for note, bar for bar, the two versions blended perfectly. Musicians and critics were amazed by the almost miraculous harmony created by the dove-tailing of these pieces, written over a hundred years apart.

The two pieces have never been separated to this day. Combined they form a majestic monument to the two mighty composers, whose creative genius spanned the bridge of time to produce, in mystic affinity, the immortal *Ave Maria,* which bears their names.—*William P. McGivern.*

Science Quiz

Smart, are you? Know all the answers, eh? You've been reading Amazing Stories, we'll bet! Well, here's your chance to prove you know your science. Let's have the answers to these "stumpers." And if you care to know your IQ give yourself points as indicated after each section. A score of 60 is good enough to evade the draft—and get in the Intelligence Service!

TRUE OR FALSE

(2 points per question)

1) Oxygen in air is heavier than oxygen in water.
2) A sponge will hold more hot water than cold water.
3) Trees in dark, shaded places grow faster than those exposed to light.
4) The loudest respiratory movements known are those of elephants.
5) The light that makes the crescent of the moon visible, and the rest of the disc faintly visible, is called moonglow.
6) Dry sand is heavier than wet sand.
7) Under comparable, and normal, conditions, a man's heart beats faster than a woman's.
8) No Americans have ever been admitted among the seventy life members of the Pontifical Academy of Sciences, the honorary body of the Roman Catholic Church.
9) Blood, in moments of intense excitement, may pass through the human heart at the rate of four gallons a minute.
10) Polar bears in the far southern Antarctica can live for as many as fifteen months without food.

WHAT WOULD YOU DO?

(5 points per question)

1) If you weighed yourself with a delicately graduated scale, finding that your weight was varying with every second, would you a) see a doctor immediately? b) have the scale checked? c) take the whole thing for granted?
2) If you looked intently for fifteen seconds at the center of a red mark two or three inches in diameter, then looked quickly at a blank piece of paper, would you see a) another red spot? b) a black spot? c) nothing at all? d) a green spot?
3) If you wanted to select a substance from which you could make one of the 22 amino acids now in chemical use, would you take a) a segment of a meteor? b) hydrogen sulphate? c) chicken feathers? d) cigar butts?
4) If you saw two chameleons fighting, would you a) expect them to remain the same color as the substance on which they were? b) turn red? c) turn red, plus the color of the substance on which they stood? d) turn black?
5) By scientific development, you have managed to harness a bolt of lightning. You then try to sell this great destructive force commercially, and are offered a) twenty dollars per lightning bolt b) a billion dollars per bolt c) ten thousand dollars per bolt d) two cents per bolt e) fifty thousand dollars per bolt. On which of these offers would you know yourself to be getting a fair price?

GUESSING GAME

(5 points per question)

1) This fellow had a scientific theory which has become one of his, and the world's, best known. It can be clued-up to your sisters and your cousins and your aunts. Scrambled, his moniker looks like this: ITENINES, his theory, like this: LAREYIVITT.
2) This stuff, or these things, have the property of passing more easily through heavy substances than through light ones. They will go through lead, but not hydrogen gas. A two-worder, which, jumbled together, still ought to be pretty simple: RORSAYNUTEN.
3) This bird is the only one that can look at one object with both eyes at the same time. All his other feathered friends have to use one eye or the other to see a single object. To mix both of you up, we'll add a common front name to him: TOOLHOW.
4) Here you'll find two hundred million tons of gold, several thousand tons of radium, and more than two trillion tons of copper in solution. Two words, jumbled into one: TAWHEATERR'S.

DO YOU KNOW?

(10 points per question)

1) What animal is this? It resembles man anatomically more closely than any other animal. Like man, it is found in all parts of the world, has a comparatively hairless body, and skin that may be white, black, or yellow. Also possesses a tarsal plate in the eyelid, and a fully developed uvula in the throat. Its name is spelled in three letters.
2) What can live in colder and hotter temperatures than any other form of life, and are able to survive at 459 degrees F. below zero, and 320 degrees F. above zero in many particular cases?
3) What everyday machine, constantly used, and at one time more in use than it is now, is affected slightly twice a day by the gravitational pull of the moon?

(Answers on page 144)

The 1941 Directory of Photographic Equipment

WHAT IS THE SPEED OF THAT FILM?
WHERE CAN I FIND THE MAKER'S ADDRESS?
WHAT ENLARGERS ARE EQUIPPED FOR COMPING?
HOW DO THESE PROJECTORS COMPARE?
HOW MUCH DOES THAT POSTER COST?
HOW MANY PRINTING PAPERS ARE THERE?
WHICH CAMERA SHOULD I BUY?

BRINGS YOU ALL THE ANSWERS

THIS *INVALUABLE* BUYING GUIDE OF PHOTOGRAPHIC EQUIPMENT COMES AS AN *EXTRA* FEATURE OF THE *GIANT* MAY ISSUE AT *NO* EXTRA COST TO YOU! IT'S COMPLETE, RELIABLE, ILLUSTRATED!

Camera fans! *Now* you can forget doubts and questions in selecting your photographic equipment! *Now,* right at your very finger tips, you can have the most *comprehensive* buying guide of cameras and supplies ever assembled. Yes, POPULAR PHOTOGRAPHY'S *new* 1941 Directory of Photographic Equipment, *bigger and better than ever,* makes it *easy* for you to compare similar products of all the different manufacturers

DESCRIBES ALL KINDS OF EQUIPMENT!

You'll be *amazed* to see how many cameras are on the market, as compared with just a few years ago. You'll be *surprised* to learn about the number of gadgets that are *now* being made to help the photographer obtain results with greater ease But this valuable Directory is not confined to cameras and gadgets . . . it extends to films, filters, flash bulbs, etc. (Note complete listing to the right)

AS HANDY TO USE AS THE TELEPHONE BOOK!

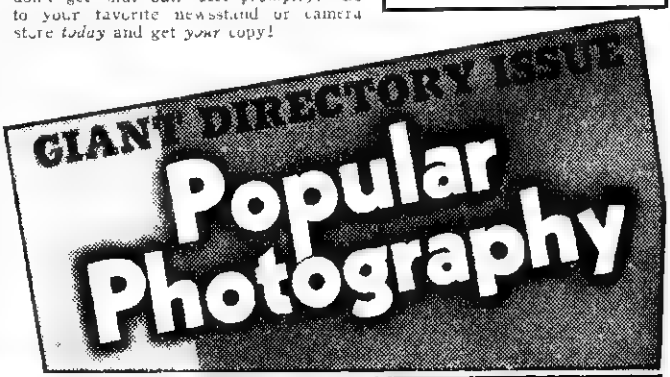
Imagine what a help this *illustrated* Directory can be to *you!* Each type of equipment—cameras, projectors, enlargers, etc.—is *classified together.* In the case of items such as films all the characteristics and speed ratings are given. In the camera listing you will find the trade name and model, film dimensions, lens equipment, shutter speeds, available accessories, and other pertinent information. Retail prices are also quoted for each item together with the name and address of the maker or distributor. And what's more, the convenient *alphabetized* index enables you to find, *instantly,* the exact item you are looking for. Yes, with this illustrated Directory you can sit in your armchair at home and "inspect" all of the photographic equipment that would take days in a camera department to see!

MAKE SURE OF YOUR DIRECTORY ISSUE NOW!

Remember, this *invaluable* buying guide of photographic equipment comes as an extra feature of the *giant* May POPULAR PHOTOGRAPHY at *no extra cost!* The print order of this spectacular Directory issue is *limited,* however, so don't get shut out. Act *promptly!* Go to your favorite newsstand or camera store *today* and get *your* copy!

Complete Directories on These Subjects:

- ★CAMERAS, Movie
- ★CAMERAS, Still
- ★ENLARGERS
- ★ENLARGING EASELS
- ★EXPOSURE METERS
- ★FILMS, Movie
- ★FILMS, Still
- ★FILTERS
- ★FLASHBULBS
- ★FLASH SYNCHRONIZERS
- ★FRONT LENSES
- ★LENSES, New
- ★MOVIE EDITING and TITLING EQUIPMENT
- ★PRINT DRYERS
- ★PRINTERS
- ★PRINTING EXPOSURE METERS
- ★PRINTING PAPERS
- ★PROJECTOR SCREENS
- ★PROJECTORS, Movie
- ★PROJECTORS, Still
- ★RANGEFINDERS
- ★SPOTLIGHTS



NOW ON SALE AT ALL NEWSSTANDS AND CAMERA STORES! 25c

Meet the Authors

We present here an autobiographical sketch of Edgar Rice Burroughs, popular author of the John Carter stories now running in our pages

IN the first place, I don't like this assignment. If I tell the truth about myself, it will make dull reading. If I tell all the truth, it will be very embarrassing for me But who ever takes his hair down and tells all the truth about himself?

According to the orthodox and approved introduction to an autobiography, I should tell all about my birth; but unfortunately, or perhaps fortunately, I can recall absolutely nothing about it: I don't even know that I was there.

Another cruel thing about an autobiography is that one is supposed to tell the exact date of one's birth Oh, well, what's the difference? I was born on Wednesday. I think I got around that very neatly, for how many of you know that September 1st, 1875, fell on a Wednesday?

But I can go back much farther than that: my first ancestor of record (barring Adam) was Coel Codevog, King of the Britons, who ruled in the third century. There! You see it was just as I suspected, as soon as you start writing your autobiography, you start bragging. You don't say a word about Stephen Burroughs who was such a notorious forger and jailbreaker in early New England days that a book was written about him. I probably inherited my bent for writing from him

Early childhood. Probably the less said about that the better Fortunately for me nearly every one who knew me then has carried his damning evidence to the grave Let it lie and moulder, that will save me from lying

Education: I had a lot of it, none of which stuck. After an advanced course in a private kindergarten, where I majored in weaving mats from strips of colored paper, I went as far as the sixth grade in the old Brown School in Chicago That school has a roster that sounds like a Who's Who: Lillian Russell, Flo Ziegfeld, and dozens of others whose names I cannot recall. Then along came a diphtheria epidemic, and our parents yanked half a dozen of us boys out of public school and put us in Miss Coolie's Maplehurst

Mr. Burroughs at his desk in Tarzana, California

School for Girls! Were our faces red!

Miss Coolie endured us for one semester, after which most of us were sent to the Harvard School on the South Side. Somewhere along the cow path of my education I had a private tutor: then I was sent to Phillips Academy at Andover, Massachusetts. They stood for me for one semester before they asked my father to take me out of there.

He did. He took me to The Michigan Military Academy at Orchard Lake, Michigan, which had a sub rosa reputation as a polite reform school. I remained there four years as a cadet, ending up as second ranking cadet officer; then I went back as assistant commandant and cavalry instructor.

Somewhere along the line I went to Idaho and punched cows. I greatly enjoyed that experience, as there were no bathtubs in Idaho at that time. I recall having gone as long as three weeks when on a round-up without taking off more than my boots and Stetson. I wore Mexican spurs inlaid with silver: they had enormous rowels and were equipped with dumb bells. When I walked across a floor, the rowels dragged behind and the dumb bells clattered: you could have heard me coming for a city block. Boy! was I proud!

After leaving Orchard Lake, I enlisted in the 7th U. S. Cavalry and was sent to Fort Grant, Arizona, where I chased Apaches, but never caught up with them. After that, some more cow punching, a storekeeper in Pocatello, Idaho; a policeman in Salt Lake City; gold mining in Idaho and Oregon; various clerical jobs in Chicago; department manager for Sears, Roebuck & Co.; and, finally, Tarzan of the Apes.

For thirty years I have been writing deathless classics, and I suppose that I shall keep on writing them until I am gathered to the bosom of Abraham. In all those years I have not learned one single rule for writing fiction, or anything else. I still write as I did thirty years ago: stories which I feel would entertain me and give me mental relaxation, knowing that there are millions of people just like me who will like the same things that I like

EDGAR RICE BURROUGHS

The readers of this magazine have been very generous to me, and in return I try to give them the best that I can No man can ring the bell every time; but he can always try; and your generous support, as evidenced by the letters you write to the editor, are, I can assure you, an incentive to a writer to do his best for you.

(Editor's Addenda: During the past few months, with the publishing of "John Carter and the Giant of Mars" in our January issue, we began a new series of Burroughs novels, to continue until early in 1942. During this time we will publish in all, five stories of the immortal John Carter (which, says Mr. Burroughs, will later appear in book form as the finest of the series of Mars stories); and four stories in the Pellucidar series, featuring David Innes in that strange world inside the earth. Simultaneously, in our companion magazine, *Fantastic Adventures*, we will feature a series of four novels of the adventures of the popular Venusian character, Carson of Venus. Thus, with 1941, we will be presenting, with the exception of the famous Tarzan, all of the pseudo-science, fantastic characters of the world's greatest imaginative writer.

No other author has ever achieved the widespread circulation, over the entire globe, in so many different languages, that Edgar Rice Burroughs has reached. Literally millions upon millions of his books are on millions of bookshelves and in millions of memories. Here is a pulp writer who will live as long in the mind of old and young alike as pulp fiction will live.

AMAZING STORIES has published the work of this writer before. Notable examples are "Land That Time Forgot," published in February, March, and April, 1927, in serial form; and "The Master Mind of Mars," published in *Amazing Stories Annual*, in July, 1927, in complete form.

Thus, for fourteen years, we have been associated, and to judge from the praise that is being heaped upon his recent work, we will be associated for many more years.

It is interesting to note that most of these present stories were written, not at Tarzana, the famed ranch and post office that Tarzan built, but in the south seas, in Hawaii. Here where soft breezes sweep in from the sea, and warm sun beats down on green palms and yellow sand, have been born the most thrilling adventure stories of other worlds Mr. Burroughs has yet written. Long may you live, John Carter, Carson Napier, David Innes—and Edgar Rice Burroughs!)

CHILDLESS Wives WHO WISH BABIES!

Doctor's Information SENT FREE!

Concerning simple way followed at home by which the female organs in relievable functional sterility may be assisted so that motherhood may then so often be easily possible! YOU AND YOUR HUSBAND MAY LATER THANK THE DAY YOU SENT FOR THIS FREE INFORMATION. Women from over the Nation write us of their joy in becoming mothers at last! FOR FREE COPY write to Warner Co., 322 W. Lake St., Minneapolis, Minnesota.

Those With Distress From STOMACH ULCERS

TRIAL OFFER

Due to Gastric Hyperacidity

should avail themselves of our Special Trial Offer of a simple home treatment which has given relief, right from the start, in thousands of cases. For a limited time only, we will gladly send our regular $1.25 size for only 35c. This 7-day treatment should convince you that it is amazingly effective, although inexpensive. The treatment does not necessitate a liquid diet nor interfere with your day's work. Send 35c for this unusual Trial Offer and ask for our informative FREE Booklet on Gas, Acidity, Sour Stomach, Acid Stomach, Ulcers or other distress caused by Gastric Hyperacidity. **TWIN CITY VON CO., Dept. 2038, Minneapolis, Minn.**

SICKNESS OR ACCIDENT

Thousands of people are disabled every hour of the day. Don't let sickness or accident find you unprepared.

READ THIS GUARANTEE

We guarantee that all just claims will be paid promptly in strict accordance with the provisions of this policy. *Alfred Sylvanus, Pres.*

WE PAY YOU CASH

$5,000.00 Accumulated Benefits for Accidental Death, Loss of Hands, Eyes or Feet

$100.00 PER MO. For Accident or Sickness

$100.00 Emergency Cash

$100.00 Hospital Expense

** All as specified in the policy*

COSTS ONLY $1 PER MONTH

The "Security" Sickness and Accident Policy gives your family quick cash when income is stopped. Pays CASH protection of $25.00 a week up to ten weeks for accident—$25.00 each week for sickness, as specified in policy—and up to $5,000.00 for accidental death, loss of hands, eyes or feet. Also other liberal features. Half benefits after age 60. Examine this new Security Policy on our 10-day Free Inspection Offer!

NO PHYSICAL EXAMINATION

Any person may apply. Ages 16 to 75, man or woman. No physical examination. The Security Policy sold by mail. No agent will call. The Arcadia Mutual Casualty Company is a safe company—not an association or assessment company. It has the approval of the Illinois State Insurance Department.

SEND NO MONEY Just mail the coupon for complete information. You alone judge and decide. Don't wait until it's too late.

THE ARCADIA MUTUAL CASUALTY CO., Desk 22-C, 75 East Wacker Drive, Chicago, Ill. **No Agent Will Call**

Please send me complete information and tell me how I may get the "Security" Policy for 10-Day Free Inspection without obligation.

Name .....

Address .....

DISCUSSIONS

AMAZING STORIES will publish in each issue a selection of letters from readers. Everybody is welcome to contribute. Bouquets and brickbats will have an equal chance. Get in with the gang and have your say.

THE APRIL ISSUE

Sirs:

Just a little comment on the April issue.

Articles—excellent

Back cover—superb

Front cover -looked too much like the cover of a jungle stories magazine.

The stories—(1) Lords Of The Underworld, (2) Big Man, (3) King Arthur's Knight In A Yankee Court, (4) Priestess Of The Sleeping Death, (5) Invisible Raiders Of Venus, (6) Killer's Turnabout

Why, oh why, must all the shorts have the same plot? Namely, that someone's going to kill someone else in a spectacular way, but gets "bumped" himself? Also, the illustrations, in some respects, are very unauthentic In "Killer's Turnabout" the illustration has the pilot of the ship waving and grinning sardonically, while the story claims that "a wave of blackness engulfed him," and *then*, the next second, the ship took off. In "Invisible Raiders Of Venus" has two *visible* cars crash, whereas the story claims they crashed *invisible* (Oh, shucks, says the editor, such petty and trivial things! The point is, did you like the issue?)

And how!

Jules L Lazar,
22 Barton Street,
Boston, Mass

You're right about the first illustration, but on the second, how could we show invisible *cars crashing? Besides, Wilcox says they became visible when dented, and we think those cars were dented plenty!—Ed*

CORRECTION

Sirs:

In AMAZING for May, there is an article by Arthur T. Harris about the partial cure for schizophrenia started by Dr Egas Moniz of Lisbon, Portugal, and not of Spain as stated therein

A. R. Ferieira,
45½ Benevolent Street,
Providence, R. I

Careful there, Mr Harris. The eyes of our readers scan your tidbits very carefully Nothing like authenticity, you know!—Ed

DO IT AGAIN!

Sirs:

Turn out a series of issues like the Anniversary issue and I'll gladly double my subscription price My criticism of this issue can best be voiced by

asking you to imagine the extent of knocks, kicks, and what have you, circulating in the very center of a vacuum!

In closing all I wish to say is: (you may quote) WOW!!!!! DO IT AGAIN—BUT *SOON!*

Furman H. Agee, Jr.,
2314 Hawthorne Ave.,
Richmond, Virginia.

We're glad you liked our Anniversary Issue, which was an ambitious undertaking. However, fifteen years is a long time, and worth an unusual effort. At least you can't say we didn't try to do it big!—ED.

SATISFIED? AND HOW!

Sirs:

Well, I hope you're satisfied!! I've been ignoring AMAZING STORIES for about eight months, but when I saw your Anniversary issue, I yielded to a sentimental impulse and took a copy home.

So what happens? Plenty! I read it, go out, get a money order, and here I am applying for a year's subscription.

I hope (and believe) AMAZING STORIES will not change in quality from that of the Anniversary issue, except to improve (if that's possible).

Violet L. Collins,
2307 N. Western Parkway,
Louisville, Ky.

Thanks for the kind words, Violet. As for the deletions we made from your long letter, we beg forgiveness. We are pressed for space this month. But we'll answer your questions. (1) Eando Binder is one person now. Earl no longer writes. (2) Apparently good art work is recognized, even in AMAZING STORIES. *We are proud that it does get so much comment.—Ed.*

SUPER DUPER!

Sirs:

I have just finished reading your, shall I say, super-duper edition It's not so bad, not so bad! You've got a nice front cover and a nice back cover. I might add that your stories weren't so bad. Boy, that Wilcox can write. Um yum. To sum it all up I might say it *really* was a super-duper.

By the way, will Albert Betts get in touch with me? We've gotten a little mixed up.

Morton Handler,
3537 Ainslie Street,
Chicago, Illinois.

FAN CLUB IN PITTSBURGH

Sirs:

The reason for this letter is to acquaint all fans living in Pittsburgh with THE PITTSBURGH SCIENCE AND FANTASY ASSOCIATION. We have meetings every Sunday. We discuss the current crop of science fiction mags, hold dances, and have an all-round swell time. We have an expand-

"Haven't got what it takes? Who? ME?"

Yes, it often is a shock to discover what others really think about you. And while they may be completely wrong, still . . .

Why not *prove* that you're going places—why not make more money?

Do you *dare* say you lack the opportunity when thousands are winning raises, promotion, through LaSalle's new home-study training?

Let us send you free that fascinating book: "Ten Years' Promotion in One." Write for it *today!* There's no obligation—nothing but a challenge, an inspiration, that can make money for you!

Ask also for one of these interesting books on *your* chosen field.

LaSalle Extension University
A Correspondence Institution

Dept. 575-R, Chicago

Please send me, without cost or obligation, "Ten Years' Promotion in One" and also the book on the business field checked below:

☐ Accountancy ☐ Law ☐ Traffic Mgt.
☐ Business Mgt. ☐ Modern Salesmanship

*Name*_____

*Address*_____

*City*_____ *State*_____

Flush Poisons From Kidneys and Stop Getting Up Nights

Be Healthier, Happier — Live Longer

When you can get for 35 cents a safe, efficient and harmless stimulant and diuretic that should flush from your kidneys the waste matter, poisons and acid that are now doing you harm, why continue to break your restful sleep by getting up through the night?

Don't be an EASY MARK and accept a substitute—Ask for Gold Medal Haarlem Oil Capsules. GET GOLD MEDAL—the original—the genuine. Look for the Gold Medal on the box—35 cents.

Other symptoms of weak kidneys and irritated bladder may be backache, puffy eyes, shifting pains, burning or scanty passage. Don't accept a substitute.

FALSE TEETH

LOW AS $6.85

90 DAYS' TRIAL
TEST THEM
EXAMINE THEM

We make FALSE TEETH for you by mail from your own impressions. You have satisfaction of MONEY BACK GUARANTEE. Customers report satisfaction but you be your own judge.

SEND NO MONEY WRITE TODAY for FREE BOOKLET and MATERIAL

CLEVELAND DENTAL SUPPLY COMPANY
Dept. 50-E1, East St. Louis, Illinois

Did "Diamond Jim" Have Stomach or Ulcer Pains?

It is hardly likely that Diamond Jim Brady could have eaten so voraciously if he suffered after-eating pains. Sufferers who have to pay the penalty of stomach or ulcer pains, indigestion, gas pains, heartburn, burning sensation, bloat and other conditions caused by excess acid should try a 25c box of UDGA Tablets. They must help or money refunded. At drug stores everywhere.

HOW GAMBLERS WIN

Twelve ways Professionals win with fair dice. No switching. No practice. One hundred keys and codes on twenty-four different backs. 50 cents. BEAT THE CHEAT, 28 pages of exposes, $1.00. The great OPEN BOOK, written in words of fire, 165 pages of exposes, $3.50. Free catalog included.

Box 2488 SPECIALTY EXPOSE Kansas City, Mo.

Professional Model

SEND NO MONEY! — Save Money!

TRANSPARENT 60 Days' Trial! ROOFLESS PARTIAL

$6.85 to $35

We make **FALSE TEETH** for you by MAIL from your own mouth-impression. **Money-Back Guarantee of Satisfaction.**

FREE Impression material, directions, catalog.

U. S. Dental Co., Dept. 5-13, Chicago

ing library of many rare stf books available to members. Also, we have several lovely young ladies as members, so both fellas and gals are welcome to join and have a swell time. Phone CH 4435 for full details.

We'll introduce you to Katherine Baum, who is known to everyone as "the oomph girl" of science fiction fandom!

Dave Elder,
4 Crete Place,
Pittsburgh, Pa.

Is an editor eligible for that introduction? We might pass through Pittsburgh sometime —Ed.

THANKS

Sirs:

Thanks a lot for the gigantic new issue. Thanks for the futuristic picture on the back cover, but I'd rather have Paul continue his series on "Cities of Other Worlds." All the same, that picture was super!

I noticed an ad about John Carter in the June issue, and that's one issue I'm not going to miss! Best wishes for your mag's constant improvement.

Richard Earnhart,
4507 Pershing Drive,
El Paso, Texas

Paul will continue his series on other-world cities. The Anniversary back cover was just special for that issue.—Ed.

A JOB OF RATING

Sirs:

I hesitantly attempt the job of rating the stories in the April issue of AMAZING, for they are all just about the best you've ever printed.

I'll list first, some of my favorite stories from back issues. Beginning in July, 1940, my favorite stories have been: Secret of the Moon Treasure, Suicide Squadrons of Space, Lost Treasure of Mars, The Man Who Never Lived, The Synthetic Woman, Rescue Into the Past, The Day Time Stopped Moving, The Voyage That Lasted 600 Years, Treasure Trove in Time, The Scientific Pioneer Returns, Adam Link Fights a War, Priestess of the Moon, The Visible Invisible Man, Mystery Moon, The Man Who Lived Next Week, and Phoney Meteor.

The April issue is rated by the star (*) system: Lords of the Underworld ****½; Big Man ****; King Arthur's Knight in a Yankee Court ****; Invisible Raiders of Venus ***; Killer's Turnabout ** (if McGivern would stick to humor he'd get better results, and we fans would flock to the stands).

Now for the art. Paul was all right, for once, on the back cover. Jay Jackson was good inside. Julian S. Krupa's drawing for Wilcox's story was the best in the issue.

St. John's Tyrannosaurus was extremely inaccurate. The beast's body was not scaly or lizard-

like enough, which characterizes all the dinosaurs. And don't tell me he's never seen one, and wouldn't know! The animal's forearms were too large and powerful, his head was not large enough, and in comparison to the men in the picture, I think his body was slightly longer than the forty feet usually agreed upon by paleontologists

You asked me what we thought of the type size in the Anniversary issue. Well, I think it's fine, but don't use it for stories in your regular monthly issues. Rather, use it for features and articles. The type for them is too small.

Krupa is the best artist you ever had, and I think he proved it in the May issue. Get him to do a front cover.

R. John Gruebner,
2306 N. 40th Street,
Milwaukee, Wisconsin.

Yes, I'm afraid we must tell you St. John has never seen a Tyrannosaurus. And neither have you. Scientists have absolutely no proof that the creature's body was scaly, or lizard-like, insofar as skin texture is concerned. They have only skeletal remains, and from them, the existence of scales could hardly be determined.

Our rule measures the human being in the picture as 1¼ inches tall. And the beast as about 6½ inches long. Since a man is 6 feet tall, thus, the beast in the picture is something like 30 feet long. So, you see, St. John does *know his paleontology! Would you like to see a head* bigger *than 6 feet long on a creature only 30 feet over all? It would be extremely out of proportion. The only thing we will concede is that the arms may be a trifle long.*—Ed.

WE DESERVE OUR NAME

Sirs:

Congratulations on your 15th Anniversary I hope you have many more. Your magazine deserves its name, it *is* amazing It is great, as every science fiction fan will agree. I have searched far and wide for one that was better, but alas, I could not find one that even ranked beside it. I have recommended Amazing Stories to many of my friends who are now steady readers

Your stories are super. The Observatory is wonderful. Scientific Mysteries are educational, Meet the Authors is great. The Science Quiz is good and easy. I like the Correspondence Corner. Discussions are very good. The art work is truly amazing, Paul's illustrations being the best. The footnotes help me.

Harold Kleemeyer,
7103 69th Street,
Glendale, N. Y.

Your comments are very flattering, and we are proud to know that you like all the little features we labor to give the book Ed.

TRAIN FOR
A GOOD PAY JOB IN
ELECTRICITY
ON REAL MOTORS, GENERATORS, ETC.

PAY TUITION AFTER GRADUATION

Practical training on full size electrical equipment. **"Learn by Doing"—12 weeks' shop training.** No previous experience or advanced education needed. Send the Coupon NOW for Big Free Illustrated Book.

Learn about the "Pay Tuition After Graduation Plan." "Part Time Employment Plan." "Job After Graduation Service." NOW . . . **extra 4 weeks' Radio Course** included at no extra tuition cost.

MAIL THIS COUPON TODAY

H. C. LEWIS, Pres., Coyne Electrical School
500 S. Paulina St., Dept. 51-66, Chicago, Ill.

Please send me your Big Free Book and details of your "Pay Tuition After Graduation Plan" and **4 weeks' Radio Course.**

Name .....
Street .....
City ..... State .....

FOREMEN; SUPERINTENDENTS PRODUCTION MEN

Study

INDUSTRIAL MANAGEMENT

Millions of men pouring into new or expanded factories require thousands more production executives to supervise them. That spells real opportunity for you if you are ambitious. You can step up to a better job. Your present experience and ability may need only a fuller knowledge of production and management principles and methods. LaSalle training in *Industrial Management* will help you greatly It is interesting, condensed, practical planned for men like you. You can study it in your spare time, at home—and at moderate cost. If you want to get ahead, ask for our free 48 page booklet on Industrial Management —it gives full details. Send this ad or write today.

LASALLE EXTENSION UNIVERSITY
A Correspondence Institution
Dept. 575-IM, CHICAGO

Be a RADIO Technician

Learn at Home—Make Good Money

Get facts about job opportunities in Radio and those coming in Television. Read how you prepare at home in spare time. Hundreds I trained have good Radio jobs or their own Radio businesses. Many make $30, $40, $50 a week. Many make $5 to $10 a week extra fixing Radios in spare time while learning. Mail coupon.

MR. J. E. SMITH Pres dent, Dept. 1EM
Nat. nal Ra.io Institute, Washington, D. C.
Mail me your 64-page book "Rich Rewards in Radio" FREE.
(No salesman will call. Please write plainly.) AGE.....

NAME .....
ADDRESS .....
CITY ..... STATE .....

FREE SAMPLES OF REMARKABLE TREATMENT FOR

Stomach Ulcers

Due to Gastric Hyperacidity

H. H. Bromley, of Shelburne, Vt., writes: "I suffered for years with acid-stomach trouble. My doctors told me I had acid stomach ulcers and would have to diet the rest of my life. Before taking your treatment I had lost a lot of weight and could eat nothing but soft foods and milk. After taking Von's Tablets, I felt perfectly well, ate almost anything and gained back the weight I had lost." If you suffer from indigestion, gastritis, heartburn, bloating or any other stomach trouble due to gastric hyperacidity, you, too, should try Von's for prompt relief. Send for FREE Samples of this remarkable treatment and details of trial offer with money back guarantee. Instructive Booklet is included. Write:

PHILADELPHIA VON CO. **Dept. 712-H**
Fox Building, Philadelphia, Pa.

TYPEWRITER **1/3 PRICE**

STANDARD OFFICE MODELS
1/3 MFRS. ORIG. PRICE
Easiest Terms as Low as 60¢ A WEEK
All late models completely rebuilt like brand new FULLY GUARANTEED.
No Money Down - 10 Day Trial
Free price-smashing catalog shows all makes in colors. FREE COURSE IN TYPING INCLUDED. See catalog before you buy. SEND NOW.
INTERNATIONAL TYPEWRITER EXCH.
Dept. 592, 231 W. Monroe St., Chicago, Ill.

10c A DAY

DO YOU WANT TO **STOP TOBACCO?**

Banish the craving for tobacco as thousands have. Make yourself free and happy with Tobacco Redeemer. Not a substitute, not habit forming. Write for free booklet telling of injurious effect of tobacco and dependable, easy way to relieve the craving many men have.

Newell Pharmacal Co.
Dept. 600, St. Louis, Mo.

FREE BOOK

IS EPILEPSY INHERITED? WHAT CAUSES IT?

A booklet containing the opinions of famous doctors on this interesting subject will be sent FREE, while they last, to any reader writing to the Educational Division, 535 Fifth Avenue, Dept. NF-5, New York, N. Y.

MAKE MORE MONEY

Taking Orders For The NIMROD Line

Earn more every day in the year representing old established firm with a complete line of fast selling necessities: Shirts of all kinds, Ties, Underwear, Hosiery, Raincoats, Sweaters Pants, Belts Breeches, Shoes, Ensembles, Sport Coats, Uniforms, Summer Suits, etc. Every item guaranteed. Experience unnecessary.

Write quick for FREE SALES EQUIPMENT
NIMROD COMPANY,
4922-M Lincoln Ave., Chicago, Ill.

MEN WANTED

Side Line — Spare Time — Full Time
BIG CASH COMMISSIONS ADVANCED DAILY

Take orders for printing, advertising specialties, office supplies, book matches, stimulators, etc. Over 2000 NECESSITY ITEMS for all retail stores gas stations, business offices, etc., at price savings of more than half. Elaborate SAMPLE DISPLAY OUTFIT sent FREE. Write quick!
NORTHWESTERN, 625-CX WEST JACKSON, CHICAGO, ILL.

Patents and Trade Marks

Patent and profit by your inventions. Protect your most valuable assets . . . Expert personal service.

LESTER L. SARGENT
Registered Patent Attorney
1115 K St., N. W. **Washington, D. C.**

Suffer Varicose LEG SORES?

IF you suffer pain and misery of Varicose Ulcers, or Open Leg Sores, send away at once for FREE Booklet "THE LIEPE METHODS FOR HOME USE." Tells all about this 40-year-old method, praised and endorsed by thousands. **Liepe Methods, Dept. F-49, 3284 N. Green Bay Ave., Milwaukee, Wisconsin.**

CLASSIFIED ADVERTISING

Alaska

INVESTIGATE ALASKA'S OPPORTUNITIES! BE INDEpendent. We help you. Informative prospectus 50c. Alaska Research, 708 1411 4th Avenue Bldg, Seattle, Washington.

Photography

FREE—ONE ROLL DEVELOPED AND PRINTED FREE. Just to get acquainted, we will beautifully develop and print your first 6 to 16 exposure roll FREE plus 5x7 inch enlargement FREE, also sensational, new folding folio to frame your prints, all free with this ad. (Enclosing 10c for handling and mailing appreciated.) **Dean Studios, Dept. 1054, Omaha, Nebraska.**

8 ENLARGEMENTS AND FILM DEVELOPED, 116 SIZE or smaller, 25c coin; enlarged prints 3c each; special offer: enclose advertisement and negative for hand-colored enlargement free with order 25c or more. ENLARGE PHOTO, Box 791, Dept ZD, Boston, Mass.

DISCUSSIONS
(Concluded)

NO AIR IN SPACE

Sirs:

In May AMAZING, page 69, how can a flag flutter in mid-space where there are no air currents?

I won't say how good your magazine is, because everybody else seems to think it's swell, that's my exact sentiment.

Ara Mesrobian,
5115 41st St. N.W.,
Washington, D. C.

Why shouldn't a flag flutter, even in a vacuum, when it is waved *by hand?*—ED.

QUIZ ANSWERS
(Quiz on page 137)

TRUE OR FALSE?

1. True; 2 False; 3. True; 4. False; 5. False; 6. True; 7. False; 8. False; 9. True; 10 False.

WHAT WOULD YOU DO?

1. (c); 2. (d); 3. (c); 4. (d); 5. (d).

GUESSING GAME—SCRAMBLED

1. Einstein — relativity; 2. Neutron rays; 3. Hoot owl. 4. Earth's water.

DO YOU KNOW?

1. Pig; 2. Bacteria; 3. Pendulum clock.

CORRESPONDENCE CORNER

Marianne Ferguson, 20 So. Buffum St., Worcester, Mass., would like to correspond with anyone in their twenties interested in science, movies, stamps, etc. . . . Langley Searles, 19 E. 235th St., N.Y.C., has SF and fantasy books for sale. . . . Stanley Crandon, 656 W. 162nd St., N.Y.C., wishes to sell books by Burroughs and Claudy, at moderate prices; write for list. . . . Herbert Van D'Elden, U.S.N., Box 7, "U.S.S. Texas," % Postmaster, N.Y.C., has been living out of the U.S. for several years and wishes to correspond with intelligent girls interested in classical music and sciences. . . . M. Schwartz, 1793 Prospect Pl., Brooklyn, N.Y., would like pen pals from everywhere; will reply promptly. . . . Michael Arthur Torro, 25 Wall St., Cranford, N.J., wants correspondents of any country interested in sports, science, stamps, photography and radio. . . . C. E. Gallagher, General Delivery, Keddie, Calif., is anxious to buy John Taine's "The Gold Tooth," "Green Fire," "The Purple Sapphire," and back numbers of AMAZING STORIES; will pay well. . . . Edmund Vincent Cowdry, Jr., 121 1901 Hall, Princeton University, Princeton, N.J., would like to correspond with young ladies (17-20) who are interested in SF and traveling; college girls preferred. . . . Thomas "Tommie" E. Townsend, 1524 W. 28th St., Little Rock, Ark., would like to contact those in the Metropolitan area of Greater Little Rock with intentions of forming a fan club; call 4-3856. . . . Jack L. Thompson, 16 yrs., 118½ N. Main St., Apt. 4, Mishawaka, Ind., wants pen pals anywhere. . . . Albion E. Doxsee, 4 Glenlake Ave., Toronto 9 Canada, would like to receive copies of AMAZING STORIES after February '41; war conditions prevent his obtaining them any other way. . . . R. K. Paris, 318 Springlake Ave., Madisonville, Ky., wants April and October '39 issues of AMAZING STORIES. . . . Reed Frederick, 298 W. Franklin St., Ephrata, Pa., would like correspondents around 17 yrs. . . . Prof. Chester Hoey, 301 6th Ave., Brooklyn, N.Y., wants correspondents. . . . Richard Gookins, 2605 State St., Salem, Ore., wishes feminine pen pals (17-22); will reply to all communications. . . . Dell Andrews, 29 yrs., 41 Retta Ave., New Miami, Hamilton, Ohio, would like to discuss by mail subjects on airplanes as well as science. . . . Marvin Goldenberg, 1382 Goodfellow, St. Louis, Mo., wishes pen pals of 14 yrs.; will reply to all letters. . . . Edward Gonia, 2475 S. Austin St., Milwaukee, Wisc., 16¾ yrs., wants male correspondents *not* interested in stamp collecting, astronomy, chemistry or physics. . . . M. Kritzberg, 4748 N. Crawford, Chicago, Ill., has hundreds of AMAZING STORIES and other SF magazines; postcard will bring free list. . . .

DOWN GO TIRE PRICES

On GOODYEAR FIRESTONE-GOODRICH and Other Standard Makes

Only our **25 years' experience**, big buying power and volume production make it possible to offer these **amazing** tire **values.** Think of it; **Standard Brand** reconditioned tires, serviceably repaired by experts with high-grade materials at a fraction of original cost. Order now. Enjoy the tremendous savings our cut prices make possible.

$1.85 28-4.75-19

BALLOON TIRES Size	Tires	Tubes
29x4.40-21	$1.85	$0.85
29x4.50-20	1.95	.85
30x4.50-21	1.95	.85
28x4.75-19	1.95	.85
29x4.75-20	2.15	.90
29x5.00-19	2.25	1.05
30x5.00-20	2.40	1.05
5.25-17	2.45	1.15
28x5.25-18	2.45	1.15
29x5.25-19	2.45	1.15
30x5.25-20	2.50	1.15
31x5.25-21	2.80	1.15
5.50-17	2.75	1.15
28x5.50-18	2.75	1.15
29x5.50-19	2.75	1.15
6.00-16	2.15	1.45
6.00-17	2.85	1.15
30x6.00-18	2.95	1.15
31x6.00-19	2.95	1.15
32x6.00-20	2.95	1.25
33x6.00-21	3.10	1.25
32x6.50-20	3.20	1.35

TRUCK BALLOONS Size	Tires	Tubes
6.00-20	$3.10	$1.65
6.50-20	3.35	1.95
7.00-20	4.00	2.05
7.50-20	3.45	3.75
8.25-20	6.75	4.95

HEAVY DUTY TRUCK TIRES

Size	Tires	Tubes
30x6	$3.80	$1.95
32x6	6.95	2.75
34x7	8.95	3.25
36x7	9.45	3.95
36x8	9.65	3.95
40x8	11.80	4.15

ALL OTHER SIZES

DEALERS WANTED

EVERY TIRE GUARANTEED Our Guarantee Bond agrees to replace at ½ price tires failing to give full 9 months' service. Replacements f. o. b. Chicago.

Don't Delay—Order Today

SEND ONLY $1.00 DEPOSIT on each tire ordered. ($3.00 on each Truck Tire.) We ship balance C. O. D. Deduct 5 per cent if cash is sent in full with order. To fill order promptly we may substitute brands if necessary. ALL TUBES BRAND NEW—GUARANTEED—

PERRY-FIELD TIRE & RUBBER CO.
2328-30 S. Michigan Ave., Dept. 7743, Chicago

COMING NEXT MONTH

A City on Io—New Full Color Back Cover
By Frank R. Paul & Henry Gade

LEARN RADIO

SERVICING COURSE—8 WEEKS
OPERATING (INCLUDES SERVICING)—5 MONTHS

H. C. Lewis

I'LL FINANCE YOUR TRAINING

Mail coupon today for free book showing how you can learn Radio Operating, Servicing, Sound and Television in a few short weeks in Coyne Shops and also how you can **pay tuition in easy monthly payments after graduation.**

LEARN BY DOING

On real Radio receiving and transmitting equipment at Coyne. Simple, easy method of practical shop training. You don't need previous experience. Prepare for Radio Operators' Government license Exam. and for good jobs in Broadcast, Police Radio, Aircraft Radio, Ships, Commercial Radio stations, or in service shops and radio factories. "Learn by doing", the quick, modern way, at Coyne Shops in Chicago.

SEND COUPON TODAY

EARN WHILE LEARNING
Job Help After Graduation

We assist you in getting part-time work to help pay living expenses and give you real employment service after you graduate.

M. C. LEWIS, Pres., COYNE RADIO SCHOOL
500 So. Paulina St., Dept. 51-8E, Chicago, Ill.

Please send me your free book and details of easy Pay-After-Graduation Plan.

NAME _____

ADDRESS _____

CITY _____ STATE _____

A CITY ON PLUTO

By HENRY GADE

Here is the story of Profundo, the city on Pluto pictured in full color on the back cover by Paul. It is an underground city, peopled by bat-like men

I guess every youngster gets a hankering to visit Pluto at one time or another while he's in the romancing age. Pluto's a heck of a long ways from the sun, and it's always been a sort of mysterious place, full of legends, and wild, fantastic stories that spacemen bring back with 'em from long outward voyages. I know it hit me that way, and since I always was adventuresome, I grabbed the chance when it came along. 'Twasn't hard in my youthful days to get a job aboard an "outer-world" freighter. The work was hard, and the outer fringes of the solar system were mighty dangerous. But I liked danger, and I went.

Pluto's a mighty depressing sight the first time you see her up close. She's old, and even further advanced toward death than Mars. There's ruins on the surface that would make you gasp if you could see them. Cities a hundred miles across, as old, and ruined, as Time itself.

But that isn't where the present-day Plutonian city is. They're underground, a long ways down, and there's only three of 'em. Profundo, the main one, is the one I visited. Y'see, life is impossible on the surface. Cold as all get-out, and outside of oxygen, which is intoxicatin' when breathed alone, the atmosphere is almost absent—no hydrogen or nitrogen.

Through the ages the Plutonians, who are bat-like creatures covered with heavy fur and standing only about three-four feet tall, have been forced below ground, until now they never come to the surface, except for grave emergency.

Space ships never land there, except for salvage purposes, picking up metals from the ruined cities. That's what the ship I signed up on was doing, and it was just as a lark that I and a couple others of the crew decided to go down to Profundo and take a look-see.

We went down in an old elevator, using some sort of anti-gravity power that still operated, for about two miles. Then it got stuck, and we had to go the rest of the way on the ancient stairway down the side of the well. Boy, were we tired. And getting up again was something we didn't dare think about.

But we forgot that worry when we reached the city. What a place! The city was a whole row of connected caves, circular in form, and startlingly like a huge subway system. In each cave was a round pit, from which rose a tapering tower, oddly like a bee-hive. It had hundreds of openings all around it, and we figured out later it was where the high society lived.

All along the edges of the subway city walls were other towers, all housing thousands of the bat-men. And on top of each was a glowing globe of energy that gave off heat.

It was only the central one, however, that was connected with the surface, and the oxygen up there. So in a way, the bat-men in the central tower hold all the aces, and they rule because of their control of the oxygen.

These Plutonians are a decadent race. All this machinery and science has been inherited, and they just use it without knowing why or how it works. That's why there's only three cities left. The machines failed in the others, and the inhabitants simply froze to death.

Well, we were looking down at all this when suddenly we were discovered. Immediately there was a heck of a ruckus, and before we knew what was happening, a whole swarm of bat-men were swoopin' around us, and in a few seconds they had us prisoner.

I figured we were goners, because these bat-people are really batty; nuts, if you get what I mean. I guess hyper-developed races get that way—their minds crack.

But I wasn't exactly right. Not that they didn't intend to kill us, but they had a tribal way of doing it. Naturally we had our space suits on, and their claws didn't hurt us. But they hustled us to the central cone and we were soon before a sort of judge. A lot of squeaking went on, and we were hustled away again.

Man, the machinery in that central cone! I wish I knew what it was all for. Mostly air mixing plants, energy rays, and so on, I guess. Well, whatever it was, it sure was fancy.

However, when they took us to the base of a long, curving thing that led up in a vast sweep, we found out it was a sort of pneumatic tube. It led to the surface, we suspected. So, we wondered at it when they dumped us into it and closed the breech. We'd thought we were to be executed. And so did the Plutonians! Y'see, being shot to the surface means death! But we had space suits . . .

A good joke on them . . . an' lucky for us, eh? You can bet we didn't try it again!

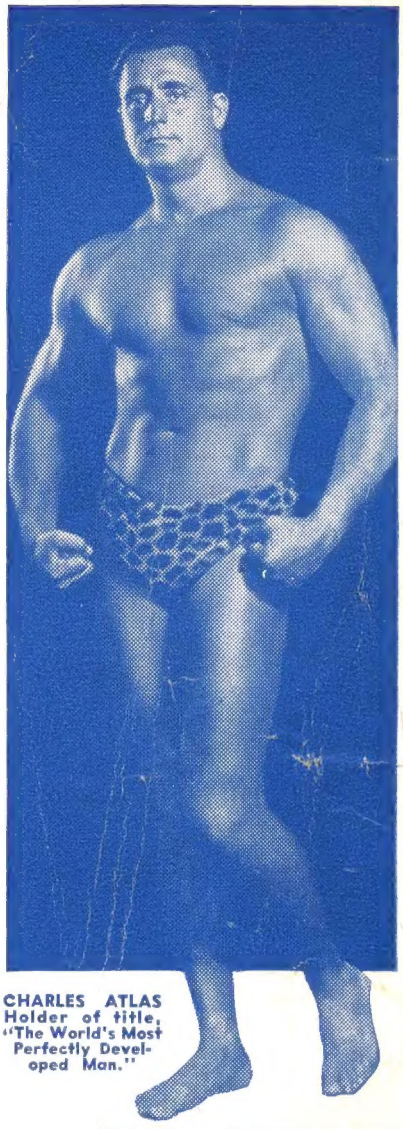
PRINTED IN U. S. A.

The 97 Pound Weakling

—Who became "The World's Most Perfectly Developed Man"

"I'll prove that YOU too can be a NEW MAN!"

—Charles Atlas



CHARLES ATLAS
Holder of title, "The World's Most Perfectly Developed Man."

I KNOW, myself, what it means to have the kind of body that people pity! Of course, you wouldn't know it to look at me now, but I was once a skinny weakling who weighed only 97 lbs! I was ashamed to strip for sports or undress for a swim. I was such a poor specimen of physical development that I was constantly self-conscious and embarrassed. And I felt only HALF-ALIVE.

Then I discovered *"Dynamic Tension."* It gave me a body that won for me the title "World's Most Perfectly Developed Man."

When I say I can make you over into a man of giant power and energy, I know what I'm talking about. I've seen my new system, *"Dynamic Tension,"* transform hundreds of weak, puny men into Atlas Champions.

Only 15 Minutes a Day

Do you want big, broad shoulders—a fine, powerful chest—biceps like steel—arms and legs rippling with muscular strength—a stomach ridged with bands of sinewy muscle—and a build you can be proud of? Then just give me the opportunity to prove that *"Dynamic Tension"* is what you need.

No "ifs," "ands," or "maybes." Just tell me where you want handsome, powerful muscles. Are you fat and flabby? Or skinny and gawky? Are you short-winded, pepless? Do you hold back and let others walk off with the prettiest girls, best jobs, etc.? Then write for details about *"Dynamic Tension"* and learn how I can make you a healthy, confident, powerful HE-MAN.

"Dynamic Tension" is an entirely NATURAL method. Only 15 minutes of your spare time daily is enough to show amazing results—and it's actually fun! *"Dynamic Tension"* does the work.

Send for FREE BOOK

Mail the coupon right now for full details and I'll send you my illustrated book, "Everlasting Health and Strength." Tells all about my *"Dynamic Tension"* method. Shows actual photos of men I've made into Atlas Champions. It's a valuable book! And it's FREE. Send for your copy today. Mail the coupon to me personally. CHARLES ATLAS, Dept. 9E, 115 East 23rd St., New York, N. Y.

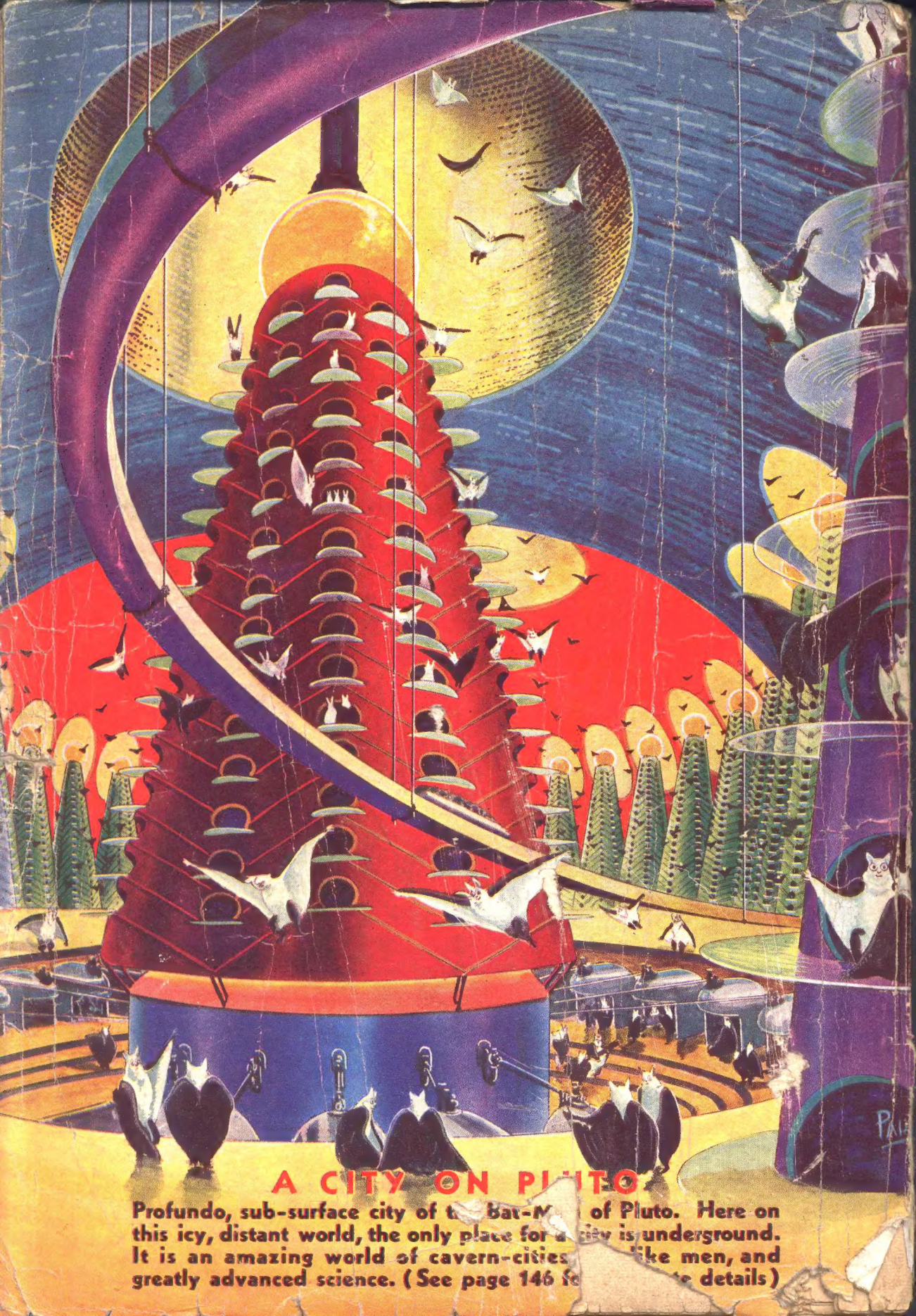
CHARLES ATLAS,
Dept. 9E,
115 East 23rd Street,
New York, N. Y.

I want the proof that your system of *"Dynamic Tension"* will help make a New Man of me — give me a healthy, husky body and big muscular development. Send me your free book, "Everlasting Health and Strength."

Name.....
(Please print or write plainly.)

Address.....

City..... State.....



A CITY ON PLUTO

Profundo, sub-surface city of t[illegible] Bat-M[illegible] of Pluto. Here on this icy, distant world, the only place for a city is underground. It is an amazing world of cavern-cities[illegible]ike men, and greatly advanced science. (See page 146 fo[illegible] details)